

LOCAL 620



Stronger Together

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“Around The Local”

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SEIU California Local Union Mergers and Consolidations

‘From the Executive Director’
Walt Hamilton

A note from the Editor: *A number of staff members have requested official ‘talking points’ in order to make sure we are giving consistent information, answer questions they continue to receive from Local 620 members about the SEIU California Local Union Mergers-Consolidations.*

The Executive Board of Local 620 adopted the following points in response to Staff’s request for guidelines in communications to members. I thought we should include the summary in this edition of the Around the Local paper as a service to our members. Feel free of course to contact an Executive Board member, or myself to discuss these issues in more detail.-Editor.

The SEIU National Executive Board has initiated a restructuring of all California Public Sector Local Unions. Some two dozen Public Sector unions throughout California are slated to be consolidated into four large, regional public employee unions.

The other approximately 23 SEIU California public employee unions have already been consolidated effective March 1, 2007.

Local 620 is unique among those two dozen local unions because we have legal autonomy (right to local control) unless and until our elected Executive Board votes to merge with our new, larger

regional union which is now called Local 721.

Local 620’s Executive Board has a number of questions and concerns which they want addressed and/or resolved before they make any decision(s) on whether or not to join the new, large regional union.

Local 620 intends to constructively engage Local 721 by sending delegates to observe their new Executive Board meetings and by sending our staff to Local 721 staff trainings, etc.

Local 620’s Executive Board has designated myself as our negotiator to develop any preliminary agreements on when and how Local 620 will vote on whether or not to merge with Local 721.

Members with specific questions or concerns should contact President Walter Kuhn or any member of the SEIU Local 620 Executive Board of Directors.



**Pictures from Local 620
Political Action Host Committee Meet & Greet
With 4th District Supervisor Joni Gray**
(see the article on page 3)



Group Profile



4th District Supervisor Joni Gray



Rear View and Food Area



Ray Perez's
Presentation



Ray Seguro and Mario Chavez



Roberto Rodriguez, Jose Ruiz
and co-workers



Socorro Perez
Asking Questions



Armida Jaime Cather and
Sandra Guzman



Lurdes Gonzalez

**Local 620 Political Action Host Committee
100+ Members hold Meet & Greet with
Santa Barbara County 4th District Supervisor Joni Gray**
Submitted by Mario Chavez

Santa Maria , May 16th, 2007 – The North County Political Action Host Committee planned and organized a historic and amazing Meet & Greet with 4th District Supervisor Joni Gray. The Meet & Greet was attended by over 100 SEIU Local 620 Members and also some of our union brothers and sisters from SEIU Local 721 (Previously SEIU Local 535).

This Forum was historic because it was the first time that Supervisor Joni Gray met with our members in her nine years as County Supervisor. Supervisor Gray started by stating that she would like to host the next meeting with our members and would like to have more opportunities to meet with our membership. She spoke to our membership about herself and expressed willingness to hear about our concerns, and proceeded to take questions from the membership. It was a successful and historic event that drew one of the largest crowds of union members in recent memory.

The North County Host Committee is made up of the following leaders:

Angelique	McNamara	Public Health
Berenice	Juarez	Public Health
Chantal	Vazquez	Public Health
Jose	Ruiz	Public Health
Katarina	Zamora	Public Health
Lurdes	Gonzalez	Social Services
Maria	Esparza-Ortiz	ADMHS
Mick	Robinson	Clerk, Recorder, Assessor
Raymond	Segura	ADMHS
Roberto	Rodriguez	ADMHS
Socorro	Madrigal	ADMHS
Veronica	Barba	Public Health
Rebecca	Lange	Public Health
Sandra	Ayala	Public Health
Armida	Cather	Public Health
Jaime		
Vanessa	Montano	Public Health
Juan Carlos	Gutierrez	ADMHS
Connie	Hurdle	ADMHS
Oscar	Garcia	ADMHS
Kay	Jeffers	ADMHS

Host committee members worked for over 8 weeks, meeting weekly to plan and organize the event. The whole process was member driven and the host committee made all the decisions during the process. Food selection, person to person outreach, program content, facilitation of the meeting, etc. *it was all member driven.*

Lurdes Gonzalez (Social Services) was the moderator of the event, Raymond Segura (ADMHS) did a presentation on the importance of member involvement in politics and how this involvement can have a direct impact on our upcoming contract fight, Angelique McNamara (Public Health) reminded everyone of the importance of completing and submitting a bargaining survey, and Jose Ruiz (Public Health) closed the event by touching on the importance of improving and building relationships with our County Supervisors.

There was much behind the scenes work that went on in preparing for this event: Roberto Rodriguez (ADMHS) was signing members in and distributing T-Shirts, Rebecca Lange was our photographer, and all host committee members did their part in organizing their colleagues to turn out making this the largest member attended event in years. The food was great, the program flowed smoothly, and our members were excited to see so many purple shirts together in one room. SEIU staff would like to acknowledge all Political Action Host Committee members for their hard work and dedication and for showing other members that working together we can really build some political power. Great job North County Political Action Host Committee!

If you would like to get more information or get involved contact any committee member or Mario Chavez (805) 963-0601 ext.13.



Santa Barbara County 4th District
Supervisor Joni Gray speaking at the
Meet & Greet



I am requesting that members in worksites in Santa Maria with no Stewards work with their coworkers to develop worksite leadership and have them contact me.

A few dollars per pay period may not sound like very much, but when you multiply these amounts by thousands of SEIU members it enables us to make a difference with our elected leaders and pass much needed laws that benefit working families.

Update From Local 620's Northern Turf

By Bruce Corsaw

Local 620 Members and Staff have been busy in the northern turf negotiating contracts, conducting field campaigns, and representing fellow Members. Bargaining is underway in Cambria CSD and the City of Morro Bay. We are preparing for negotiations for Full Time and 32 Hour Members in the City of Santa Maria, surveys will be distributed in July, and our desire is to be at the table in late August or early September.

We continue to work on representational issues with San Luis Obispo Superior Court dealing with ongoing anti-union tactics from Court Administration. Local 620 Staff and Stewards are continuing to work on the appeals from discipline, grievances, and complaints. We have also filed two complaints with State Public Employees Relations Board (PERB). There was one settlement hearing in May, which did not resolve the issue and another scheduled for June. Presently we are scheduled for the first hearing to take place in Los Angeles in September. Administration is seeking help from the Judicial Council of California (AOC) in defending themselves for their unprofessional and inappropriate actions. The AOC has assigned two attorneys and has hired a third attorney from Wiley Price & Radulovich law firm. In May Local 620's Executive Director, Walt Hamilton met with Presiding Judge Roger Picquet and Judge Martin Tangeman to discuss ways of improving communications and reestablish a meaningful Labor/Management collaborative. The goal is to restore a professional and ethical atmosphere to San Luis Obispo Superior Court through open communications and training of Management, Supervisors, and Union Members on representational rights.

Local 620 has proposed that the first item to be addressed through Labor/Management are the issues raised in the recent member survey and that jointly we respond to those issues in writing.

We are all working on the County of Santa Barbara negotiations. More Contract Action Team Members (CATs) are still needed. Worksites that have Stewards are easy, but we have several worksites that presently do not have Stewards. I am requesting that members in worksites in Santa Maria with no Stewards work with their coworkers to develop worksite leadership and have them contact me. It is extremely important for all members to participate in County negotiations covering their wages and benefits.

Together Local 620 members can overcome obstacles at all of the bargaining tables with unprofessional and anti-union employers in support for all working families. One way is by voluntarily contributing to SEIU Local 620's Political Program (COPE) so that we have the funds to make substantive impacts and changes with Local, State and Federal Government such as Universal Health Care to fight the rising cost of healthcare. A few dollars per pay period may not sound like very much, but when you multiply these amounts by thousands of SEIU members it enables us to make a difference with our elected leaders and pass much needed laws that benefit working families.

~Together we can and, do make a difference.~

Do you have free speech rights as a Public employee?

Submitted by George Green

Does the First Amendment allow the government to use a public employee's speech as the ground for discharge or denying a promotion? The Supreme Court's answer to this question was at one time a simple "Yes." Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote in 1892, "There may be a constitutional right to talk politics, but there is no constitutional right to be a policeman." The so-called right/privilege distinction was maintained even as late as 1952 when, in *Adler v Board of Education*, the Court said, "You have a constitutional right to say and think as you will, but you have no constitutional right to work for the government."

By 1967, however, the Court would note that "the major premise of *Adler* has been rejected." In its place was a new premise: that the government ought not to be able to do indirectly what it cannot do directly. The Court took the position that public employment cannot be conditioned on a surrender of constitutional rights. The problem for the Court then became how to balance the government's interest in maintaining an efficient public workplace against the individual employee's interest in free expression.

Pickering v Board of Education considered the case of a public school teacher fired for writing a letter to a newspaper critical of the local school board. In ordering the teacher reinstated, the Court found that a public employee's statements on a matter of public concern could not be the basis for discharge unless the statement contained knowing or reckless falsehoods, or the statements were of the sort to cause a substantial interference with the ability of the employee to continue to do his job.

Mt. Healthy v Doyle also involved a fired school teacher. Doyle lost his job after calling a radio station disc jockey to complain about a memo sent to school teachers concerning a new teacher dress code. Because Doyle had given the district other reasons for terminating him (such as giving "the finger" to two students), the Court remanded the case for a determination as to whether Doyle would have been fired even if he hadn't engaged in the protected expressive activity of calling the radio station. If he would have been fired anyway, the termination could stand, the Court said.

Connick (1983) and *McPherson* (1987) both discuss the important issue of what constitutes speech "of public concern." The issue is important because, as the Court says in *Connick*, if speech does not relate to a matter of public concern, "absent the most unusual circumstances" the discharge will not present a First Amendment question for court review. In *Connick*, a 5 to 4 majority of the court concluded that speech about the internal operation of a district attorney's office is generally not of "public concern."

Moreover, the Court held, distribution of a questionnaire by the discharged employee raising questions about questions about management of the office could be reasonably seen as sufficiently damaging to close working relationships to justify discharge. In *Rankin*, on the other hand, a 5 to 4 majority concluded that the statement "If they go for him again, I hope they get him," made immediately following news of Hinckley's attempt to assassinate President Reagan, was speech on a matter of public concern. The Court ordered the deputy constable's reinstatement, noting that the remark--made only to a fellow employee--was not likely to affect either her ability to perform her largely clerical duties in the constable's office or public confidence in the office.

Branti (1980) is one of a series of cases in which the Court has prevented discharges based on the political beliefs of employees. *Branti* was one of six assistant public defenders fired from a county defender's office simply because they were Republicans and the newly appointed County Defender was a Democrat. The Court noted that sometimes may be permissible to use political affiliation as a basis for hiring and discharge decisions (for example, no one would doubt the right of the President to hire only Cabinet officers or speechwriters that share his or her political affiliation), but said that assistant county defenders did not hold the type of decision-making power that made political affiliation an appropriate consideration. Ten years later, in *Rutan v Republican Party of Illinois* (a case involving the staffing of Illinois prisons), the Court extended protection for political beliefs to initial hiring decisions, as well as decisions relating to promotions and transfers.

In 2006, in *Garcetti v Ceballos*, the Court considered the First Amendment claim brought by a deputy district attorney in the Los Angeles DA's office who had been transferred and denied a promotion because of his statements to supervisors criticizing the credibility of statements made in an affidavit prepared by a deputy sheriff. The Court, 5 to 4, rejected the employee's claim, holding that the First Amendment does not protect public employees for "statements made pursuant to their official duties." According to Justice Kennedy, the critical fact in the case was that "his expressions were made pursuant to his duties as a calendar deputy. That consideration--the fact that Ceballos spoke as a prosecutor fulfilling his responsibility to advise his supervisor about how to proceed with a pending case--distinguishes Ceballos' case from those in which the First Amendment provides protection against discipline."

Meet Our New Organizer

Marcelino Sepulveda!

“I came to SEIU Local 620 because I want to bring forward my professional skills with my experience in grass roots political activism.”

“I come to SEIU excited to join the labor movement. I’ve always greatly appreciated the historic improvements won by workers in benefit to all – such as the 8 hour work day, safe working conditions, and maternity leave.”

Hi, my name is Marcelino. I’m the new Organizer with SEIU Local 620 and I’d like to introduce myself to you. I’ve been with SEIU for a couple of weeks now in training and have been settling in to the work steadily becoming familiar with the Union and how it functions. Later this month I will travel to Washington D.C. for a ‘WAVE’ training for organizers. I’ve heard great reports about this training and am looking forward to it. I intend to learn a lot and to return to work super-charged and inspired with ideas to support workers in unionizing.

I came to SEIU Local 620 because I want to bring forward my professional skills with my experience in grass-roots political activism. Prior to working here I was a call center supervisor providing crisis-intervention counseling (specializing in suicide prevention) but my true passion has always been social-justice organizing and that is why I came on board with SEIU.

Ever since I was young I’ve been concerned with and involved in social justice issues. One of my earliest memories is of marching alongside my mother with Cesar Chavez leading us in a rally to unionize garlic workers in the fields of Gilroy, CA. The passionate energy of the workers, their cries for unionization, and my mother shouting “Si Se Puede” impacted me deeply. I began to understand that it is sometimes necessary for people to stand up in solidarity and to struggle together for equality and justice for all or else the powers concede nothing.

I come to SEIU excited to join the labor movement. I’ve always greatly appreciated the historic improvements won by workers in benefit to all – such as the 8 hour work day, safe working conditions, and maternity leave. There is much to thank the labor

movement for and, as a seasoned social justice activist, I’m happy to now be part of it.

I have a solid history in grassroots activism which I am bringing to this job. Since 2001 I have acted as Co-Chair of the People’s Coalition. Several years ago we brought the community together for a People’s March for Social and Economic Justice. More recently we’ve organized the major anti-war protests and coalition building in Santa Barbara. If you’ve been to any of those you may recognize me. I’ve also hosted a global music and politics radio program for the past six years on KCSB 91.9FM Fridays 2-4pm.

Some of the issues I’ve worked on over the years include: Native American sovereignty, immigrant rights, environmental sustainability, in defense of political prisoners; anti-racism, lesbian & gay rights, and socialism. I also have a B.A. degree in Religious Studies.

In a small nutshell that is who I am. I look forward to meeting you in the near future and getting to know you. It’s my honor to work for you with SEIU. In this age of globalization, where health-care benefits and wages are increasingly under attack by the already-rich in a race to bottom line costs, workers need to defend themselves by unionizing and collective-bargaining and unions need organizers who know how to organize workers to win! I aim to be that for us.. Sincerely, Marcelino.



The Public Retirement Journal May 2007
**Pension Plans are an “Economic Engine”
 According to PERS and STRS**

Over the past few years while the Legislature, media, and the public questioned the value of defined benefit systems, many folks have asked PERS to define the value of pension plans in the California economy. It's obvious that there would be some impact if you pulled the plug on investments and benefit payments, but how much impact seemed impossible to define.

As a result, PERS sought out the help of researchers experienced in analyzing the broader impact of money entering an economy. At the request of the PERS and STRS (the State Teachers Retirement System) boards, two professors at the California State University, Sacramento conducted a study of the economic impact to the California economy resulting from retiree benefit payments, with a recently released report detailing their findings¹. This study was the first of its kind to evaluate the value of pension fund activities.

The study only looks at the impact of annual benefit payments, not the entirety of PERS and STRS activities. The report notes that this study is the first of a series, so you can likely expect a future report to examine the impact of PERS and STRS investment activities on California's economy.

The Boring Details

The researchers used a reputable modeling program to evaluate the ripple effect of business and government revenues, as spending from retiree benefit checks works its way through the California economy. To accurately predict the “output” effect, the researchers computed the total benefit dollars sent to each zip code in California in order to evaluate the impact using county-specific economic data.

Because the study only evaluates the impact on California's economy, money sent to retirees who live out of state – 14.7 percent of PERS retirees, and 12.1 percent of STRS retirees – wasn't factored into the study.

What did they find?

The researchers found that, on average, each dollar invested” by the state and local agencies with PERS returns \$8.55 to the California economy; each dollar invested by the state and local school districts with STRS returns about \$6.71.

According to the study, PERS and STRS combined benefit payments in 2006 of \$13.76 billion support a total economic output of approximately \$21 billion and generate almost 139,000 jobs in California.

At PERS, investment earnings on employer and member contributions pay for 76.8 percent of retirees' monthly benefits. Similarly, investment earnings at STRS account for 75 percent of the amount paid to retirees. The study found that the total impact of PERS' and STRS' value added to the state's economy is about \$10.252 billion per year, or about 0.65 percent of the Gross State Product (a regional measure similar to the GDP). According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the pension funds add nearly as much to the state's economy as do the hotel industry (\$10.37 billion) and more than forestry and fishing combined (\$6.44 billion).

The researchers also concluded that state and local governments gained \$1.35 billion in revenues as a result of PERS and STRS benefit payments and the ensuing spin-off within the California's economy, the equivalent to more than one percent of the state's general fund budget. More specifically, each employer dollar “invested” in PERS yields a \$.56 return in government revenues, and each employer dollar invested in STRS yields a \$.44 return in government revenues.

The report also contains impact data on a county-by-county basis, if you're interested in more details about how PERS benefit payments are impacting your local region, give us a jingle and we'll let you know.

(Footnotes)

¹ The researchers released two reports, one detailing the impact of PERS benefit payments (The Annual Economic Impacts of CalPERS Benefit Payments, by the Applied Research Center, California State University, Sacramento; April 2007. Available at <http://www.calpers.ca.gov/eip-docs/about/press/news/economic-engine/calpers-economic-impacts.pdf>), with the second report summarizing the combined impact of PERS and STRS retiree payments (The Combined Annual Economic Impacts in California of CalPERS and CalSTRS Retirement Income Benefit Payments, by the Applied Research Center, California State University, Sacramento; April 2007. Available at <http://www.calpers.ca.gov/eip-docs/about/press/news/economic-engine/calpers-calstrs-combined-economic-impacts.pdf>).

Santa Barbara County Employees' Assn.
 SEIU Local 620
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NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
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Santa Barbara Office
 933 Castillo Street
 Santa Barbara, CA
 93101
 Phone: 805-963-0601

If any information has changed:

New address?
 New Email Address?
 Name Change?
 New Job Location?
 New Job Classification?
 New Home Phone?

MEMBER CHANGE FORM	
Name:	Home Phone:
Address:	Work Phone:
City:	Zip Code:
Work Location:	Fax Number:
Job Title:	Date of Birth:
Beneficiary:	Relationship:
Email Address:	Signature:

Chapter: (Place an "X" next to your Chapter)

<input type="checkbox"/> Air Pollution Control District	<input type="checkbox"/> Pismo Beach, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Maria, City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Arroyo Grande, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Port San Luis Harbor District	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired Chapter
<input type="checkbox"/> Atascadero, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Coastal Unified School Dist	<input type="checkbox"/> Guadalupe, City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Cambria Community Svc District	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Obispo Court Tech. Unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara Hourly , City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpinteria, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Obispo Courts "General"	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goleta Water District	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara "General", City of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grover Beach, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara "TAP", City of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Isla Vista Recreation & Parks Dist.	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara, County of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Morro Bay, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara Court Employees	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paso Robles, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Maria Cemetery District	