



October 2009

Service Employees International Union  
Local 5  
San Antonio, TX  
[www.seiutx.org](http://www.seiutx.org)

Volume 2, Issue 8

## STATE OF THE UNION

*The September 30th Meeting was one to attend. We had lots of employees speak their minds and discuss options for FY 2011. We also had a special guest Councilman Philip Cortez. Below is an excerpt of one member's thoughts. Turn to page 2 for a summary of the meeting.*

### Faces of the Union– Maria Garcia Metro Health

I have six beautiful children and a good husband. I love my family very much. There is very little I wouldn't do to make sure my family is secure.

A few months ago I heard some really alarming news. I heard about layoffs, pay cuts, furlough holidays, losing health insurance. And even changes on my retirement payments. All these negatives were coming from our city manager in forms of a "Budget Proposal" for 2010. All to "EASE" the city deficit. All these things would directly affect my family. I started to worry. Fear for my family's security set in.

Many COSA employees live just like me. It is common to have both parents working to make ends meet. To take from my pay, to make health insurance unaffordable and the possibility of getting laid off really hit home.

I really felt the fear. What can I do, where can I go, who could possibly help me? I couldn't just sit around and hope for the best. I needed to do something quick. I knew there was an injustice here because I knew that the City Manager was making bookoo bucks. I remember many unhappy San Antonian's complaining about it. Everywhere I went I would hear about it. Then I got mad!

I started to think... I'm sure I'm not alone. There's got to be others that feel the same way that I do. I'm sure lots of COSA employees were as upset as I was about what was about to happen to their family!

**I was right!** SEIU was the answer! I was not alone. Joining SEIU was the best thing I could have done! I found a brotherhood that was willing to stand "WITH" me against this injustice. A brotherhood that like me would not let their families suffer the brunt of this ailing economy... Why let those that make these decisions stay fat at the expense of our children.

When I joined SEIU, I got so much information that today I know what I am up against and I no longer am worried or in fear. I know that I'm on a winning team. I started to tell anyone that would listen... "Stand with us. Alone you can do nothing. Together we can make positive changes for our families!"

Which reminds me...I would like to at this time thank SEIU's EMC (Employee Management Committee) for successfully negotiating in my family's behalf? Thanks to them the 2010 budget proposal looks a lot better... But remember, the battle is not over. The budget proposal for 2011 is right around the corner. Are you ready?

I strongly encourage everyone here that isn't a member to join. If you really care about the future of your family, then this is your opportunity to show your family you care!

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#### Special points of interest:

- Want up to date information by text message? Text "SEIUTX" to 787753

Standard text messaging rates may apply.

- Visit [www.seiutx.org](http://www.seiutx.org) for up to date information and additional articles on the FY 2010 Budget



## September 30th Meeting

Members came together to speak their minds. Union Leaders like Maria Garcia on the front page spoke their minds and the community listened! Councilman Philip Cortez spoke to the crowd about how important it is to be united and to continue the fight for working families.

Members talked about joining a winning team that looks for options and doesn't use working families as a fist cut. Discussions included what the "other " team offered for FY 2011...

Furloughs = 1.5 % Pay Cut, No COLA (2 years) = 4% Loss in Value, TMRS Cutting Benefits, Health Premiums? (Pass cost on to employee), Privatization of City Services (Parking Division), and City of San Antonio & Bexar County Consolidation

Members decided that there are other options and challenged themselves to grow their union strong. If you want to join the SEIU Winning Team contact your EMC representative or an organizer today!.

## 311 Changes

Starting October 1st, 2009 COSA's 311 Call Center will be changing its services hours. 311 will no longer be a 24 hour a day/7days a week facility. The new hours will be 7am-11pm Monday through Sunday including Holidays.

## New Employee Orientation (NEO)



Do you have public speaking skills? Are you a good role model to other COSA employees? If so, we need you to volunteer to speak to NEW COSA Employees at their orientation about the Employee Management Committee and your union. You present for 15 minutes ,2 times a month on city time. Please contact Elisa at (210) 737-4217 for more details. Thank you to Manny Olague, Diane Edwards and Richard Martinez for presenting in the past.

## SWMD Delegation Update No 3&4

The SEIU SWMD Delegation Team has been continuously meeting with Director David McCrary and his management team to collaborated on departmental improvements. Each of the four service centers is represented by two member delegates and an SEIU Representative. Meetings are tentatively scheduled every 2-3 weeks. If you have any questions or suggestions please contact your delegate. (Members receive detailed summaries in their mailboxes) Topics of discussion have included...

- New Trainer Program /Blue Route Details
- Route Loads and Guidelines
- New City Ordinances
- Quality of Trucks

### SEIU SWMD Delegation Team:

**NE "Toolyard"**—Greg Quintanilla & Adrian Vasquez **NW**—Joe Flores & Ricardo Rodriguez

**SW "Zarzamora"**—Raul Caballeo & Darrell Davis **SE**—Hector Villanueva & Esteban Aguirre



## View from the Director's Chair

### Growing Labor Unions Will Grow Our Economy

by Dr. Richard A. Levins

Ask anyone, and they will tell you that the subprime mortgage mess brought down our economy. Otherwise, the economy was “fundamentally sound.” I’ll agree that tanking mortgages pushed us over the edge, but the subprime train wreck was only a symptom of a much larger problem. If subprime mortgages hadn’t got us, something else would have.



Here’s what I think happened. Beginning around 1980, labor union strength began to decline and wage growth slowed dramatically. For a while, working families compensated by having more family members take jobs, but eventually stagnant wages and rising costs took their toll. More families became trapped in debt as they tried to maintain a middle class way of life on wages that were no longer up to the task.

Even though wages were stagnant, American workers continued to become more and more productive. This is something all of us can be proud of. But since there were not enough labor unions to bargain that productivity into higher wages, super wealthy owners fattened up on what otherwise would have gone to middle class families. Since 1980, the share of wealth and income going to the upper one percent of Americans more than doubled.

As the super-rich got even richer, they became more powerful. They changed banking rules to allow them to play fast and loose in ways that were once illegal.

They changed the tax system in ways that would benefit them at everyone else’s expense. Rather than build factories that put Americans to work, they sent jobs overseas. Rather than pay workers middle class wages, they lent money to middle class families on increasingly risky terms.

Now we have the witch’s brew: one part working people struggling to stay in the middle class, one part the gains from productivity growth going to the wrong people, and one part unimaginable fortunes chasing short term gains at any cost. We shouldn’t be surprised that when Big Money met underpaid workers, the result was too much debt and too much funny money for the overall system to bear.

Looked at this way, we have a big policy problem. If we continue treating symptoms instead of problems, as we are now doing, the best we can hope for is to put things back the way they were. If we do that, we will have more rogue banks, more people without middle class incomes, and more fat cats running both Washington and Wall Street.

Lasting recovery will come only when we start treating the problem: without middle class wages, there is nothing “fundamentally sound” about our economy. We must grow our labor unions so they can do what only labor unions can do: keep the gains from worker productivity in the hands of working people.

*Richard A. Levins is Professor Emeritus of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota. He is a popular writer and speaker on issues of market power and labor. You can learn more about his work at [www.middleclassunionmade.com](http://www.middleclassunionmade.com).*

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## October 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> First Friday Mtg w/HR	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> NEO 12pm	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> NEO 12pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Member Leader Mtg	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> Happy Halloween