

## **Resolution 117 – We Are Unstoppable: Our Program to Win for Working People**

We are united by the belief that when we come together we can meet any challenge we face. We are 2 million people from every corner of North America who keep our communities healthy and safe; care for our elderly and people with disabilities; educate our children; and provide the services our neighborhoods depend on.

At our 2012 Convention, we adopted our union's *Vision for a Just Society*: where all workers are valued and all people are respected; where all families and communities thrive; and where we leave a better and more equal world for generations to come. Now, at the 2016 Convention we have adopted resolutions and constitutional amendments outlining an Unstoppable Program to Win for Working People for the next four years.

### **Working people are winning**

We stand on the shoulders of the janitors, elevator operators and window cleaners who were the first members of our union in 1921. Since then, our work has inspired millions of people to stand up for their families and communities.

In the last four years alone, we've created a movement of people calling for everyone to have \$15 an hour and a union so that every family can succeed and we supported more than 150,000 people across the country who stood up to form a union with SEIU. The growing Fight for \$15 movement and a Union that began when fast food workers risked everything by striking in November 2012 is a powerful example of what can happen when working people stand together to make change. Because of our work together more than 18 million people have won raises across the country.

SEIU members are driving this fight and winning. Since we gathered in 2012, thousands of homecare providers joined together to form their union and thousands of other providers won raises to \$15. The states of New York and California are taking steps to implement a \$15 minimum wage and other states are expected to do the same.

Thousands of underpaid faculty at colleges and universities across the U.S. are organizing to raise pay and improve job security. For the first time, airport workers in Washington, D.C., New York, Seattle and other cities are coming together and striking nationwide for better safety standards and wages that can support their families. People who work in industrial laundries and nail salons are standing up against dangerous working conditions and decent pay.

We helped re-elect Barack Obama and elect Justin Trudeau, whose leadership is making a lasting difference for working families in the U.S. and Canada. Despite historic financial and fiscal crises, SEIU members and key partners are leading work in Puerto Rico to change the political and economic environment and create a better future for the Island.

We have won paid sick leave for working people in places such as California, Massachusetts, Oregon and

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others. We've fought to restore voting rights for people who were formerly incarcerated and have rejoined their communities in Maryland and Virginia and have expanded access to voting through laws that make voter registration automatic in Oregon, California, Vermont and West Virginia.

We've worked hard to bring justice to immigrant communities and won Executive Action from President Barack Obama, providing relief for hundreds of thousands of immigrant families.

We are building a growing movement for economic, racial, immigrant and environmental justice and for equality for women, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people that has changed the national conversation—even shifting the agenda at U.S. presidential debates.

### **Our world is changing and many threats remain**

Technology, social and environmental changes are transforming our lives in profound ways, large and small, for better and for worse. As a result, we are raising our families, doing our work and building a movement in a world that is increasingly volatile, uncertain and complex.

Profitable corporations are pushing wages down, causing 64 million people—our parents, our friends and neighbors, and our children—to have trouble making ends meet because they make less than \$15 an hour. The same corporations are outsourcing full-time jobs, making new jobs part time and “just in time,” making multiple jobs the norm for those who can find them.

Billionaires and corporations game the tax system and leave it to the rest of us to pick up the tab for schools, care for our parents, grandparents and children, healthy communities and safe streets. They don't want anyone to stand in their way of pushing down wages, so they force their own employees to rely on public assistance to care for their families.

The three-legged stool of retirement security built on Social Security, pensions and personal savings is broken. Nearly half of private sector workers have neither a pension nor any personal savings. For these millions of workers, Social Security will be the only source of income in retirement. However, Social Security benefits are low, particularly for lower-wage workers.

The wealthy special interests know that when we unite, we win. That's why they are pouring billions of untraceable money into politics to divide us. And they are funding new efforts every day—from lawsuits like *Harris v. Quinn* and *Friedrichs v. CTA* to repeated efforts to repeal healthcare reform that is the law of the land. Our opponents are also using state, local and municipal legislation in states such as Wisconsin, Michigan and Ohio to make it harder for working people to come together to improve their lives. As a result, less than 7% of people working in the private sector have been able to come together and form a union.

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Racism is yet another way that the wealthy few regularly structure and hijack our government and economy to benefit themselves and disadvantage the vast majority of people, including white people. The system is rigged against people of color, especially Black people, who are more likely to do worse than white people in economic well-being, housing, health, and in our broken and prejudiced criminal justice system. These injustices are part of our countries' painful legacy of slavery and anti-Black racism and continued structural and systematic racial and economic inequalities in our government, economy, and the institutions most important to our daily lives—such as education, housing, healthcare and criminal justice. Even progress like the landmark Voting Rights Act is under attack, once again threatening the most basic democratic rights of Black Americans.

Throughout history, politicians and employers have used immigrants as scapegoats, and used the prospect of immigration reform to whip up hate and fear. We have seen immigrants fall prey to unscrupulous employers, and we have seen them fight back against dangerous working conditions and unsafe streets. And yet we've seen courage and bravery as immigrants have faced that fear and have stood up to fight for justice.

In too many communities like Flint, Mich., our children don't have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe, sometimes for reasons that are directly caused by wealthy special interests that prioritize profit over quality services and the elected leaders who represent their interests. As our members who live in or come from communities in New York, New Jersey, California, the Philippines, Haiti and other places know well, climate change is real and poses significant threats to people's health and livelihood, and disproportionately affects working people, the poor and people of color.

### **We are unstoppable**

Even with all of the success that SEIU members and other working people have achieved, there is much more to do to ensure families across the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico can realize our *Vision for a Just Society*. The organizations that we have worked so hard to build to create better futures for our families are under constant attack by wealthy special interests who believe that working families' success gets in the way of their extreme agenda. That's why we have passed resolutions, as summarized below, to build an unstoppable movement for change.

### ***Therefore, be it resolved that:***

1. **We will commit to three core strategies** to win on a scale we have never seen before:
  - a. **We will create the next forms of organizations** where the 94% of working people without a union can join together and create sustainable organizations so we can improve the lives of everyone in our communities;

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- b. **We will build a wider movement** around our common struggle for economic, racial, immigrant and environmental justice for everyone in our communities and equality for women, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people; and
  - c. **We will innovate in our union** so we can use our collective strength and bargaining to win for our families and the communities we serve.
2. **We will commit to the Public, Property Services and Healthcare divisions plans for the future** and calls to action adopted on May 21<sup>st</sup> that include the three core strategies;
3. **SEIU Puerto Rico, with the entire union at its side, will commit to working with key partners to change the political environment of Puerto Rico** and rebuild the Island to our vision of our just society through our three core strategies. We will work toward influencing the 2016 presidential election via innovative strategies that include developing member leaders to continue to organize and change the political foundation of the Island.
4. **We will stand with our brothers and sisters in Canada** who adopted a resolution at the Canadian Convention on May 20<sup>th</sup> that includes the three core strategies and establishes the formation of an SEIU Canada Futures Committee;
5. **We will ensure that all member and nonunion activist education, leadership and training programs are designed to empower and to build leaders at the highest level** to lead in the fight to win our Vision for a Just Society, We will align with the revised competencies developed by the 21CBC and LAJ committees, develop effective approaches to creating sustainable organizations in the face of attacks by wealthy special interests by innovating in our current work, and work closely with local unions to create leadership development plans, track and report on data, and identify, recruit and develop millennial member leaders;
6. **We will link the fight for economic justice with racial justice** because we know they are inextricably linked. We will execute a set of internal and external recommendations that will help end racism that lives in our criminal justice, healthcare, economic and other structures that hold everyone back. We will commit our organization to ending anti-black racism that is an ugly remnant of slavery and segregation in the United States.
7. **We will continue our commitment to commonsense immigration reform** by supporting federal legislation that offers a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S., continuing to support and drive state and local level pro-immigration policies, and expanding the rising Latino and API electorate to help make the threat real behind the immigrant American vote;

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8. **We will commit to uniting with the environmental justice movement** to fight for clean air and water, to combat the effects of climate change, and to highlight the intersection of environmental justice with issues of economic, social and racial inequality;
9. **We will commit to retirement security for all** and will work with labor, employers and progressive allies to ensure that all Americans will receive Social Security benefits that will allow them to live safely and securely;
10. **We will have a stronger focus on building power in states and provinces**, which combined with our industry power, will help us drive our three core strategies and win on scale. We will adopt principles that combine state power with industry strength and will guide our program and investment decisions;
11. **Through our Building a Better Future for Working People campaign, we will drive our issues in the 2016 election and beyond by:**
  - a. Putting our issues front and center during the 2016 election cycle.
  - b. Mobilizing to help elect Hillary Clinton as president and other champions for working families.
  - c. Building lasting organizational capacity that allows the millions of people that we engage with around the election to be an ongoing part of our growing movement, through organizations such as iAmerica and Black civic engagement networks.
  - d. Mobilizing in the weeks and months after the November elections to push elected leaders to deliver on the issues most important to working families.
12. As one fundamental component of our strategy to Build A Wider Movement, SEIU members will re-commit ourselves to building a powerful SEIU Retiree program. We will provide an opportunity for all SEIU members to remain active members in the union after retirement by developing a program that meets their needs and interests.
13. We will envision new ways to deploy all of our assets in alignment with the needs of our members and their communities and respond to the opportunities underserved communities present. We will challenge the global financial markets to adopt democratic reforms, address structural racism and commit to long-term value creation, rather than short-term speculation, market manipulation and wealth extraction.

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14. We will fight to transform government so that it balances the power and influence of corporations and wealthy special interests, helps facilitate new forms of organizations for working people that can raise wages and build sustainable power, and address structural racism, climate change and our broken immigration system while rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure.
15. We will establish a standing 21<sup>st</sup> Century Blueprint Committee of the International Executive Board to study future trends and advance our capacity to win in a rapidly changing world.

With the adoption of this final resolution encompassing all the elements of the “Unstoppable Program to Win for Working People” by the 2016 Convention delegates, the International Union officers, International Executive Committee and International Executive Board, local unions and affiliated bodies are directed to take all necessary and appropriate steps to implement the recommendations of the Unstoppable program after we leave this convention.