

LOCAL 284



We provide a clean, safe, nurturing place for children to learn and grow.

We support teachers, faculty, and families.

We work hard to provide for our families and we give back to our communities.

WE ARE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES AND WE ARE PROUD OF WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO!

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And Much More...

www.seiu284.org

The Communicator

A publication for SEIU Local 284 Education Workers Across Minnesota

STRONGER TOGETHER

FALL 2012

Two Paths Forward for Education: "Bleak" and "Abysmal" or Economic Growth

We asked a question of management in several districts during negotiations this year, "Given the past several years trend of school funding, how do you see the future?" "Bleak" and "Abysmal" were among the most common answers. Not a pretty picture for our schools and the children we are tasked with educating.

But it's the path down which many in education see us on. It's not hard to see why. In 2003 the state made a commitment to our children that it would do the heavy lifting for funding our schools. But political agendas focusing on winning power and not empowering schools have led to decreasing state funding over the years. As a result, schools are increasingly relying on property taxes to keep up. The chart shows the trend as the 'levy' line, which is property taxes, has risen dramatically.

This means that unless things change we are building the future on property taxes while the mortgage foreclosure crisis continues and the incomes we use to pay property taxes for most of us are flat, as jobs are still too scarce.

Our business and political leaders

are building the future of education on a house of cards as they have squashed any attempt to raise state revenue by closing corporate tax loopholes or raising the income tax rate of the rich to the same level as the rest of us.

That leaves only debt through borrowing, cuts, or increased property

And this is not sustainable. We can't build a future for education on the foundation of a weak real estate market, and on the backs of working families whose real incomes have been flat for too many years.

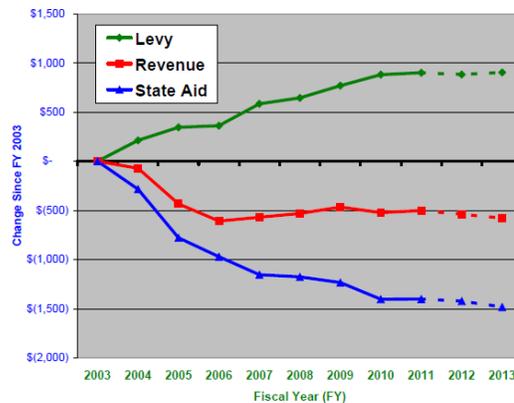
So we need a change- a big change - because small change won't buy us a thing. We need to elect leaders who will invest in our schools and communities instead of treating them like banks, borrowing money from them to balance the budget instead of investing in them. **We can chart a different path forward, we can envision a bright future for our children.**

And we need a change of leadership We need leaders willing to work with us to blaze a different path into the future. **Leaders for whom investing in our children's future is more important than political pandering in order to pocket campaign donations. Leaders who will speak up for children** instead of scape goating our schools in order to ensure that the wealthy and the big Wall Street corporations are not called to account.

And we need each other- our members - to vote for education and economic growth on November 6th!

-Leif Grina, Member Engagement Director

Change in Per Pupil Funding Since FY 2003*
State Total



*Change since FY 2003 in per pupil operating levy, aid, and revenue in constant FY 2011 dollars.

taxes as the only choices for schools trying to keep up.

This is not right. We are creating winners and losers based on local property wealth. We are widening the achievement gap for children of color in our poorer communities.

This is not smart. Our schools play an enormous role in our economy. Economists agree – education is an economic development tool. Disinvesting in our children's education is just plain dumb. Our economy needs all the help it can get.

What You Need To Know About the Photo ID Amendment and May Not Know

Who doesn't have a photo ID? How hard can it be? These are questions I hear from people when I'm talking to them about this amendment. The photo ID requirement, if passed, will impact you and your family in many different ways. This amendment will make it harder for eligible citizens to vote, it is unnecessary, and it is very expensive, forcing counties to raise your property taxes to pay for it.

Here are some things that will change if the Photo ID Amendment passes that you may not know.

Every Minnesotan would be required to obtain a government ID with a current address to be able to vote.

Many Minnesotans' do not have an ID with a current address, including: seniors, college students, low income workers and anyone who has recently moved!

Same day voter registration will end. Over 10% of votes cast in MN in 2010 were first time voters, recently moved and college students. A same day ballot will change to a "provisional ballot" where the voter must go to a county seat or DMV location within 10 days of the election to show a photo id. How many voters do you know who will return after the election to validate their vote? In states where this happens, many votes are never counted.

Early rural MN mail ballot voting and absentee voting will end as you know it. Minnesota has some very rural areas and these areas do not have polling loca-

tions; instead voters have always received a mail ballot to vote. This would no longer happen. The county would have to provide polling locations, equipment and staff. There is NO funding allocated for this so local tax payers get to foot this bill.

Now let's look at who doesn't have an ID and how hard can it be?

Many seniors whether living in their own home, in assisted living apartment or in a nursing home do not have a current photo ID and/or an ID with the correct address nor do they have a way to get it. (*Check out the AARP's position to this: <http://www.aarp.org/politics-society/government-elections/info-08-2012/voter-id-laws-restrict-older-americans.html>)

The AARP is opposed to this amendment and are asking seniors to vote NO.

Military personal have a photo ID but unfortunately it does not contain their home address to validate polling location, not to mention how they will validate their "provisional" vote?

Should the ID be required and someone cannot afford one, an ID must be provided for them by the state, costing tax payers millions of dollars (possibly tens of millions of dollars) when budgets are already tight. Check out information on the internet as this has cost tax payers in states where this has passed tens of millions of dollars. These are just some of the reasons your union is asking you to vote NO. For more information check out Our Vote Our Future on the internet at www.ourvoteourfuture.org

-Carol Nieters, Executive Director

We are SEIU Local 284 and we believe in the American Dream!

The American Dream is built on a quality educational system for our children. We care about them and their education, because THEIR dreams are OUR future! But we face a crisis. Corporate and political leaders treat out schools as banks—borrowing from them, instead of investing in them. The financial foundation for the future of education is being eroded and so is our work.

Because we care, we are calling a

Local 284 Leadership Assembly

Saturday, October 13th, 2012

9:00am—3:00pm

**Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
285 N Dale St. Saint Paul, MN 55103**



***Nomination of Executive Board Officers will happen during the business portion of this meeting.**

****Please bring a food donation or an unwrapped gift to be donated to BCTGM Crystal Sugar workers that have been locked out from work for 14 months.**

All members are welcomed and encouraged to attend. For further information, please contact your Contract Organizer

Right to Work is Wrong for Minnesota

We need to end the *Right to Work* threat to Minnesota workers by electing pro-worker majorities in the Minnesota House and Senate. Many members share with me their distaste for politics. They feel as though their voice does not matter or will not be heard. Nothing could be further from the truth. Your voice does matter! Just as your union gives you a voice with your employer because of your right to collectively bargain, the right to vote gives you a voice in the elections this fall. We only have to look to Wisconsin to see why we need to participate in politics and vote.

School employees, teachers, state, county and municipal workers in Wisconsin have for all practical purposes lost their collective bargaining rights. Union workers take home pay has gone down by 15% or more and benefits such as sick leave, vacation, and holidays have been reduced. This happened because of the legislative actions of politicians in Wisconsin. This legislation was pushed by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, but it only became law when the anti-worker majorities in the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate voted to approve the legislation. Here in Minnesota, we have also had an anti-worker majority in the House and Senate. So last ses-

sion our union and the rest of labor worked hard to keep over 50 bills from becoming law that would have weakened your collective bargaining rights. We kept the *Right to Work* Constitutional Amendment off the ballot. With the support of Governor Dayton and his Veto power, we have protected our members from these attacks.

Next session, Right to Work Legislation will be brought up as a Constitutional Amendment again, if we do not elect a pro-worker legislative majority. So please get informed about your legislative candidates. SEIU held member lead legislative candidate screenings throughout the state. Members asked questions of legislative candidates and endorsed candidates who were pro-worker. Please consider the SEIU endorsement information that you receive from your contract organizer, by mail from your union, or by phone from your union, when making your decision on who to vote for. When we elect a pro-worker majority to the Minnesota House and Senate we can stop the threat that *Right to Work* would bring to the working people of Minnesota.

-Keith Niemi, President

School Board Elections—The Power of Your Vote

This year, many school districts are holding school board elections. Every two years half of your school board is up for re-election and held accountable to the public. Elections give our members a great opportunity to choose the people who will run the policy and budget of your district. The difference between a school board member who values the work you do every day as a district employee and a school board member who thinks your contribution is not important to the success of

the students, makes difference in employee retention and therefore the students experience. Your jobs, wages, benefits and your work environment greatly depend on the small group of people on your school board. This year, SEIU members in 12 school districts are engaging in school board elections by holding screenings, meeting with candidates and helping elect pro-SEIU member candidates. Contact your Contract Organizer if you want to get involved in your local school board elections!

Matt Toburen, Political Organizer

SEIU Summer Picnics!

SEIU MN State Council held more picnics than ever this year for members around the state. Members shared a meal in Buffalo, Sauk Rapids, Crosby, Minneapolis, Rochester and Cambridge. Picnic fare was served to about 700 members and their families.

At each locale, endorsed local candidates were invited to attend. They spoke of the urgent need to regain ground on education, nursing home and health care funding. Concerning is the shift to local property taxes that has occurred due to cuts to Local Government Aid (LGA.) At the Crosby Picnic, Legislative Candidate John Ward (District 10A) spoke about the divisiveness that has gridlocked St. Paul. Candi-

date Joe Walsh (15A) made a call to action at the Sauk Rapids Picnic, urging members to work to elect legislators that understand the Middle Class and to restore the funding for programs, including public safety in our communities. Local 284 Contract Organizer, William Dial, spoke out at the Cambridge Picnic about the drop to a four-day school week in North Branch and that this could happen across the state if we don't change the politics in St. Paul. Members attending agreed that the state must pay back the school funding that was deferred.

The members and staff put on some pretty good picnics and nothing dampened the spirit of members, including the drizzle that C.O.'s Laurie Stammer and Scott Anderson stood out in to grill burgers and hot dogs for members in Buffalo!



LOCAL 284



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If you have an article or suggestion for the newsletter, please contact Nicholas Frey:
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LOCAL 284 OFFICERS

Executive Director:	Carol Nieters
President:	Keith Niemi
Vice Presidents:	Mark Hanson Sandy Ringler
Trustees:	Vacant Vacant Vacant
Members at Large:	Linda Leighton Bob Cook Donna Morris Mark Krey Valerie Rolstad
Sergeant at Arms:	Mark Bolin
Senior Member:	Ginia Klamecki

The Officers of Local 284 make up the Executive Board. Executive Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. Please contact Union headquarters if you would like to attend.

Local 284 Meetings

October 11th	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Offices)
*October 13th	Leadership Assembly: 9am (285 N Dale St. St. Paul, MN 55103) ** Including Nomination of Officers
November 15th	Executive Board Mtg: 3pm (Local 284 Offices)
November 15th	General Member Meeting: 6:30pm (Local 284 Offices)
December 13th	Finance Committee Meeting: 6pm (Local 284 Offices)
December 20th	Executive Board Meeting: 3pm (Local 284 Offices)
December 20th	General Member Meeting: 6:30pm (Local 284 Offices)

"I'm voting to re-elect President Obama, because the Affordable Care Act that he signed into law: gives money back to consumers instead of to health insurance executives, allows someone with pre-existing conditions to get coverage, and allows my sons to stay on my insurance until they are 26."

-Terry Buttleman, West St. Paul Paraprofessional