

SEIU-UHW EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING MINUTES – ADOPTED 9/7/18

JUNE 15, 2018

A moment of remembrance was held for long-time SEIU-UHW leader, Gigi Toledo and community leader Irene Botello.

Hospital Division Director Chokri Bensaid opened the meeting with a discussion of UHW's work fighting for healthcare justice. He introduced **Cecelia Gomez Gonzalez (Community Division)** to share the work and successes of the Community Division to fix dialysis. She lost both her patients to complications from dialysis, and the dialysis campaign is close to her heart. In addition to fighting to improving dialysis, the Community Division has defended the ACA, fought for hospital charity care, helped get Medicaid expansion on the ballot in Idaho, phone banked to elect healthcare champions like Gavin Newsom, and many other campaigns. She introduced **Mario Gonzalez (Community Division)** who described his fight to improve dialysis alongside other patient, dialysis workers, and SEIU-UHW. This is the winning team to get justice for dialysis patients and workers. Changing the dialysis industry can't be done alone, it takes a team. Mario and Cecelia honored one of the members of that team, dialysis patient Irene Botello, who passed away recently. They honored her activism to improve dialysis, her commitment to her family, and her courage to tell her story.

Chokri Bensaid introduced **Rebecca Schroeder** who is fighting to expand Medicaid in Idaho on behalf of her son Brady who has cystic fibrosis. Their insurance company is billed more than \$30,000 per month for just one critical medication. Rebecca is an advocate for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and has advocated in Idaho and federally to protect access to affordable healthcare, including Medicaid. Lawmakers in Idaho have refused to expand Medicaid, which leaves a gap where low-income Idahoans earn too much to qualify for Medicaid but don't earn enough to get subsidies through the ACA exchange. After Maine approved Medicaid expansion at the ballot, she and others founded a nonprofit called Reclaim Idaho to put Medicaid expansion on the ballot in Idaho. They have gathered enough signatures, and Medicaid expansion will be on the Idaho ballot in November, and their polling is strong. The Fairness Project is supporting the Idahoans for Healthcare, which is the campaign to win the ballot initiative in November.

Chokri Bensaid introduced **Adena Barnette**, a high school teacher and a member of the West Virginia Education Association Executive Board. She and other teachers across West Virginia went on strike, winning raises for every state employee in West Virginia and inspiring teacher strikes and activism across the country. She shared her path to leadership in her union and lessons from the West Virginia educators strike. When the state proposed major takeaways, the unions reacted quickly to plan their fight. Much of the initial organizing and communications was done through a Facebook group and meant teachers across the state could participate. They had to build coalitions, move quickly, and keep up their unity and momentum. Since they won in March, teachers have kept momentum and are educating voters about lawmakers who supported teachers and those who did not. She closed by offering hope for the power of unions to continue winning for working people.

Dave Regan and **Stan Lyles** installed newly elected executive board members.

The Executive Board approved the minutes from the April 2018 meeting on a voice vote.

Dave Regan spoke in tribute to UHW member Melvia Latimore (Alta Bates) who passed away recently. In the recent California primary, SEIU-UHW's endorsed candidate for Governor, Gavin Newsom, finished with the most votes. Republican John Cox finished second and will also advance to the November election. We are in a good position to help Gavin Newsom win in November. However, the Supreme

Court will issue their decision in *Janus v AFSCME* in the next two weeks. We need to seize the opportunity to grow as much as possible in the next Governor's first term.

Kaiser Permanente has picked a fight with UHW and is currently illegally refusing to bargain with UHW and other members of the Coalition. Raises, benefits, and the contract are in place for 16 more months, and it is now time to mobilize UHW to defend Kaiser members.

Dave Regan described the *Epic Systems v Lewis* decision from the Supreme Court that can force workers into binding arbitration for cases against their employer. Millions of workers have lost access to the courts to hold their employer accountable. This is part of a strategic effort to marginalize the majority in America while a small minority does extremely well. UHW's power to fight back is organizing and political power.

Kaiser Permanente is trying to force bargaining rules that would take away UHW's political voice and ability to advocate for members and patients. We will mobilize our leadership structures, organize politically, and organize health insurance purchasers to find a path to win.

The Fair Pricing for Dialysis Act is qualified for the November ballot, and we are asking for endorsements from major respected groups in California that care about patients and working people. UHW put initiatives on the ballot in Palo Alto and Livermore to limit hospital profiteering. In the city of Pomona, UHW is in the process of qualifying an initiative to raise the minimum wage for hospital workers and improve staffing.

UHW is also moving forward with the lawsuit against the state of California arguing that the Medi-Cal system is unfair to Latino Californians.

On all fronts, UHW is fighting for members, nonunion workers, and patients in California.

Discussion:

- **Rudy Montalvo (Community Division)** said he's ready to fight.
- **Gabe Montoya (Kaiser Downey)** expressed his concern about Gavin Newsom getting elected. We will have to work hard and not be overconfident.
- **Micheula Fletchall (Kaiser Woodland Hills)** asked how we change the ruling in *Epic Systems v Lewis*
- **Charlee Vang (Kaiser South Sacramento)** said he's ready to make a plan and fight for his rights
- **Alicia (Community Division)** reminded Dave that he has a big name to live up to and told the story of David and Goliath
- **Janice Williams (Kaiser Regional Operations)** asked for clarification of *Janus v AFSCME*
- **A member from Kaiser Orange County** spoke about the ballot initiative filed in Anaheim by Disney workers. He recommended partnering with the Disney workers' union.
- **Gisella Thomas (Tenet Desert Regional Medical Center)** discussed her experience as an immigrant and her concern about the current attacks on immigrants. People need to start speaking up when they see someone being confronted and told to go back home.
- **Lasonia Cosio (Kaiser Division staff)** described how she and her contract specialist told Labor 411 the truth about how Kaiser is treating workers.