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February 9, 2008

Andrew L. Stern, President
 SEIU
 1800-Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
 Washington DC 20036

Dear Brother Stern:

Like you, I take great pride in the recent growth of SEIU and the prominent position our union holds in the labor movement and in public policy debates of critical importance to working families. I was honored four years ago when you appointed me to your executive committee. During the previous eight years, we had worked together constructively to help hundreds of thousands of health care workers in California and beyond join our union and change their lives.

In United Healthcare Workers West (UHW), we have always believed that our international union should be about more than numbers and headlines. Over the past two years, a stark difference has evolved between SEIU's projected image and its real world practices. An overly zealous focus on growth – growth at any cost, apparently – has eclipsed SEIU's commitment to its members. As labor leaders, we are obligated to place the needs of our members first and to uphold democratic principles not only in the workplace, but also in our union. That is increasingly being blocked, circumvented and manipulated.

It is said that "democracy dies in the darkness." It is with deep disappointment and great concern that I have watched dark shadows fall upon SEIU, diminishing our hopes for revitalizing the labor movement. Let me shed some light on the undemocratic practices we in UHW have experienced firsthand:

- You unilaterally decided to eliminate the Catholic Healthcare West (CHW) Unity Council and appointed an International Union consultant to manage our collective bargaining relationship, even though the Council's creation was adopted by CHW rank-and-file leaders and approved by the International Executive Board. By all accounts, our relationship with CHW had been enormously successful and had led to significant growth and dramatic improvement in the lives of SEIU members who work at CHW. Your decision potentially weakens us just as we are about to enter negotiations for 16,000 CHW employees, jeopardizing the lead contract of our 2008 contract campaign that has lined up the expiration dates of nearly 100 acute care hospitals covering approximately 100,000 caregivers.
- Similarly, you silenced workers' voices in bargaining with the California Nursing Home Alliance by directing International Union representatives to meet with our employers behind our backs and then abused your power by barring UHW

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Sal Rosselli, *President*

Jorge Rodriguez, *Executive Vice President*

Joan Emslie, *Secretary-Treasurer*



members and staff from participating in direct negotiations with our employers, despite the fact that UHW represents 75 percent of the nursing home members in bargaining. Based on our recent meetings with representatives of the nursing home industry, it is obvious that the International Union's secret discussions with our employers are continuing.

- You recently decided to intensify the divisive debate about separating long-term care workers from hospital workers in California which will further undermine our unity just as negotiations commence for contracts at more than 100 nursing homes – contracts we fought for years to align on a common expiration date of June 2008 -- in order to win major improvements for caregivers and residents and secure organizing rights for workers in as many as 98 additional facilities, including 17 where organizing drives are already under way.
- Despite our representation of the largest number of workers in Catholic health care of any SEIU local and the direct involvement of two employers with whom we are engaged in active campaigns, you exclude UHW from participation in discussions with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. In response to our request for review of your decision, you have now scheduled a hearing in Chicago for February 12, with only 8 days' notice, whose scope is far broader than anything approved by the International Executive Board, on the alleged ground that it is necessary to review all aspects of our Catholic health care employer relations and representation, raising the specter that these matters will be placed entirely under control of the International Union and its bureaucracy where rank and file members will have no say, and no ability to affect their workplace destiny.
- In a deliberate attempt to create instability in important ongoing organizing campaigns by fomenting mass resignations among our Southern California organizing staff, your officers and staff helped orchestrate the recent resignation of Southern California Organizing Director, Amado David, whose letter of resignation appeared to have been created on SEIU equipment weeks before his resigning and is now being circulated by you to other SEIU leaders, all as a pretext for taking further action against UHW's leaders and members. Despite this attempt, our UHW Southern California organizing program remains fully staffed and staff remain committed to UHW's organizing program.
- You and other international officers interfered in the affairs of the SEIU California State Council – our collective vehicle for state legislative and electoral action – using the imposition of a revised constitution and bylaws to prompt a presidential election when none had been anticipated, then manipulating the per capita voting formula and procedures in order to produce the outcome you desired. Ultimately, you permitted provisional locals with no members (and locals that have never paid per capita) and locals that were months behind in per

capita payments (owing the State Council nearly \$2 million) to vote in the election so that you could control the outcome of the election and seat the leader of your choice.

- Your secret meetings with Governor Schwarzenegger and other elected officials, without the participation of SEIU California leaders, fatally weakened our many years of disciplined work to bring about true health care reform. Those secret discussions with the governor and his staff led them to believe that SEIU – and the labor movement along with us – would settle for far less than was necessary to protect the interests of working families or to win the support of California’s voters. The final deal that was struck, while far better than the settlement you had recommended, was flawed and tainted as a result of your actions and was politically doomed.
- Just last week you attempted secretly, although unsuccessfully, to squelch the SEIU California State Council’s endorsement of Barack Obama for President.
- You removed a UHW administrative vice president from the Executive Board of the California United Homecare Workers Union (CUHW) for asking questions about “budget and allocation of funds.” Your actions like this have created a culture of fear throughout SEIU, making local officers, members and staff afraid to speak up for fear of reprisal.
- Your international officers and staff manipulated voting procedures in Unity Council bargaining with Tenet Healthcare in order to thwart the will of the members and achieve your desired outcome. Specifically, international officers tried to cast “per capita” votes on behalf of unorganized workers who had no knowledge of the negotiations, paid no dues to SEIU, and were not even in the process of forming a union. Your failed effort would have given away our members’ right to strike for seven years and would have forced them to accept lower standards.

As you know, UHW (formerly Locals 250 and 399) is the oldest health care union in the country, with 75 years of proud and historic accomplishments. We stand for the principle of one member, one vote and the basic belief that members must have a seat at the bargaining table and the right to vote on all agreements that affect them. We believe that involving members at all levels of our union, providing rank-and-file workers with the support they need to decide our direction and lead our struggles, while winning good contracts that improve caregivers’ lives and the quality of the care we provide. These are the best examples we can use to organize the unorganized. Consistent with this, we believe that the deterioration of democracy in our union will have disastrous consequences.

The Nursing Home Alliance agreements and others negotiated by the International Union appear to relegate entire categories of workers to permanent second-tier status, without basic rights and standards to be expected in a union contract or any reasonable hope of achieving them. This transactional exchange of members' rights and standards for greater numbers contradicts the core mission of SEIU. We must be committed to fight for higher standards so that workers who perform the same work will ultimately earn the same pay and benefits, regardless of the identity of their employer.

Let me be clear. We fully support a culture of organizing and strongly approve the goal of organizing our core industries. We also understand the obligation that union strongholds like California and New York have to help organize health care workers outside those two states. Our own organizing record, our leadership in developing and supporting the organizing recommendations of the President's Committee 2000 and the establishment of the Unity Funds, our successful bargaining-to-organize fights in CHW, Tenet and HCA that led to growth opportunities outside of California, and our direct assistance to local and international organizing efforts throughout the country leave no doubt regarding our commitment.

Each year UHW provides \$23 million in per capita payments and Unity Fund contributions to the International Union. We do so, even though this is the fourth straight year in which not a dime is spent in California. However, we cannot support, as you propose, sending even more of our organizing dollars to Washington and giving the International Union even greater control of their use when so many of SEIU's organizing ventures have not and will not build power in our core industries, which was the purpose of the dues increase. Furthermore, we see an ever diminishing International Union commitment to improve workers' lives now or in the future.

Much of what I have outlined here I have said to you directly and in Executive Committee meetings. I have abided by the code of conduct for Executive Committee members that requires what is said in the committee to stay in the committee and that positions adopted by majority vote of the committee should determine the position of all its members.

In good conscience, I can no longer allow simple majorities of the Executive Committee to outweigh my responsibility to our members to act out of principle on these critically important matters. I say this with no ill will, but with a deep sense of conviction.

As an elected leader of UHW and an elected international union vice president, I believe that maintaining my silence about the sacrifice of our principles and our failing to give voice to a clear and honest disagreement about the road we are on and the future direction of our International Union is too high of a price to pay. Therefore, my conscience leaves me no option but to resign my position as a member of the Executive Committee, effective immediately.

I believe that workers must have a voice. Indeed, that is the central reason I believe in our union. I believe that for workers to have a representative and effective voice, capable of changing their lives and the direction of our nation, many voices must be heard, not just those from Washington. I resign not to walk away, but to stay involved and to be able to speak freely.

In Unity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sal Rosselli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Sal Rosselli
President

SR/dn
seiu-uhw/ctw