

Resolution # 205a Adopted at the 2008 SEIU Convention

Uniting Working People to Change Our Lives

Today and every day, in cities and towns all across America...

Parents who didn't use to be able to take their children to the doctor when they got sick can now do so. Hard-working people who had to work two or three jobs and still were barely scraping by now have more time to spend with their families.

Women and men who provide vital services to their communities now have more say to make sure they have what they need to do the job right – and the strength they need to be treated with respect and dignity.

These are some of the more than a million people in America whose lives have improved by uniting with SEIU since 1996 in the most successful organizing effort by any union in American history.

By joining their strength with the million workers who already belonged to our union, the million new members of the SEIU family have....

Helped all of us maintain and improve standards in our industries for pay, health care, retirement, and working conditions. They have also

Helped make our union a far stronger force in our cities, states, and country on all the issues that make a difference in our daily lives – health care, education, housing, transportation, public safety, immigration reform, retirement security, and much more.

Started to give working people more of a voice in the South, Southwest, and other parts of the country that are growing fastest.

Uniting Our Strength The Result of Past Convention Choices to Work More Closely Together

The doubling of our membership strength in 12 years to improve pay and benefit standards for all of us is a remarkable, historic achievement that no other modern union has ever matched. From 1997 to 2007, we added the strength of nearly 100,000 workers per year, more than triple the rate in the previous period from 1988 to 1996.

This success has been made possible by a series of bold and difficult choices at SEIU's 1996, 2000, and 2004 Conventions about strategy, priorities, and structure:

Increased focus and resources. In 1996, the International Union raised spending on organizing for greater strength from 20% to 50%. The local union 10-15-20% program began so that by 1999 many locals had increased organizing spending from an average of less than 5% to at least 20%. We focused our efforts on uniting workers who do the same type of work in health care, property services, and public sector and publicly funded services.

In 2000, the local union delegates to the SEIU convention adopted the New Strength Unity Plan, part of which dramatically increased resources from members for their local unions and created the Unity Fund for major breakthrough strategies.

Increased unity and accountability. For the past ten years, elected local union leaders increasingly have

been serving not just as heads of their local affiliates but as the collective leadership responsible for a national strategy to unite and improve the lives of workers in their industry and ensure quality services for our communities.

At the 2004 SEIU convention, the delegates increased accountability and coordination within the SEIU divisions that are made up of local unions in each industry.

By moving, step by step, toward pooling our strength – bargaining, political, membership, and financial capital – we have been able to develop new models of organizing that unite workers on a far greater scale for everyone’s benefit.

Homecare. Our members’ combined political strength in California and the combination of local, state, and national resources made it possible to help 74,000 home care workers in Los Angeles establish their legal right to a union, which in turn led to a coordinated effort to help 345,000 of their counterparts in the rest of California, Oregon, Washington, Michigan, Illinois, Massachusetts, Ohio, and parts of Wisconsin to do the same. With each contract, homecare workers are “invisible no more,” gaining more pay, health coverage, and other improvements.

Childcare. Building on that experience, we pooled our financial and political strength to help 49,000 child care providers in Illinois to win their right to a union, and then began spreading that model to Oregon, Washington, Maryland, Maine, and Pennsylvania. To date, we have united more than 75,000 family child care providers to win pay and benefit increases, and have active campaigns in Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, and Rhode Island to unite an additional 120,000 providers.

Security. We pooled our strength, including global relationships with unions in other countries, to win an agreement with the largest security company in the world – based in Sweden – and then worked to organize other companies as well to help thousands of mostly African American security officers to raise wages and gain health care.

Janitors. We used our existing strength in dealing with national building owners and cleaning contractors to help janitors in nonunion markets such as Houston and Miami to win improvements and lay the groundwork for more victories in the South, while winning the best contracts ever in the industry in the last four years.

Nursing homes. By coordinating strategy, we won agreements with national nursing home chains that led to respect for workers’ rights and common efforts to win badly needed funding. Workers at Extendicare, Longwood, Gem, and other chains across the country have a new opportunity to join SEIU through a fair process, and we won funding increases in nine states for nursing home care that total more than \$1 billion.

Hospitals. By pooling resources and strategy across the union, we were able to reduce employer interference with workers’ freedom to form a union at hospitals in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Nevada, New York, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin, as well as Puerto Rico and Canada. In all, we helped more than 33,000 nurses and other hospital workers to unite with us so they could negotiate improvements for themselves and their patients.

Multi-service. SEIU local unions, together with another union, UNITE HERE, helped unite workers in the multi-service industry that is dominated by three huge global corporations that contract to provide a wide range of support services to governments, businesses, hospitals, local school systems, universities, and other institutions. Together, we have won agreements with two of the three largest multi-service firms to respect workers’ freedom to form a union through majority sign-up. We have already helped 14,000 workers gain a union so they can begin the climb to more economic justice with improved pay and benefits.

South-Southwest. We decided at the 2004 Convention to jointly commit serious resources and effort to unite workers in our industries in the South and Southwest, with the result that we now represent more than 100,000.

Puerto Rico. The support of SEIU members throughout North America has helped members in Puerto Rico win public sector collective bargaining and gain new public sector contracts.

Canada. In just the past three years, increased unity and strategic focus has helped 13,000 more workers join us and led to a major affiliation of a new local union. These gains have built workers' strength in healthcare and property services and made us the fastest growing union in Canada.

Global strength. As a result of coordinated campaigns with global labor federations and about 20 unions around the world, 18,000 more U.S. workers have SEIU representation and improved working standards and about 60,000 workers in multinational corporations in SEIU industries in other countries now have a voice at work.

In all, of the 1 million more workers who have united with us since 1996, more than two-thirds did so as a result of campaigns that involved not just their local union but support from the rest of SEIU in terms of financial resources, staff and members, political strength, capital strategies support, and/or member bargaining strength.

If we had not acted more and more like one organization – and not just a collection of loosely federated locals – most of the newly organized 1 million would probably not be members today.

Future Challenges Require More Unity, Larger Scale

We have a great opportunity today as polls show that about 50% of U.S. workers would choose to have a union if they didn't face employer opposition. That's at least 40 million who don't have one now.

But taking advantage of this opportunity to strengthen all working people requires overcoming some stark realities:

The organizing process established by the National Labor Relations Act can no longer be counted on to protect workers' freedom to form a union..

Most employers refuse to respect workers' freedom to form a union without management intimidation.

In many cases, we have had to conduct a corporate social responsibility campaign that holds the employer accountable for the full range of ways that its policies and practices affect the larger community. That takes money, political strength, and the ability to campaign effectively throughout the nation or even around the globe.

Our industries and employers increasingly operate on a regional, national, or global basis. Their increased size allows them to bring to bear far more political pressure than a purely local employer can.

Capital is now blurring the lines across industries and between the public and private sectors. Already, more than 5 million people work for companies controlled by corporate buyout firms that have no industry focus but only an interest in moving and manipulating money to maximize profits for a limited group of executives. In the past few years, corporate buyout firms have taken ownership of the nation's largest office building landlord, Equity Office Properties; the nation's largest for-profit hospital chain, HCA; the nation's largest nursing home chains, including HCR Manor Care, Beverly Living Centers, and Mariner Health Group; and the largest U.S.-based provider of cleaning and food services, Aramark. Earlier this year, a buyout takeover of one of the largest national child-care providers, Bright Horizons, was announced. The buyout firms' latest

target is public infrastructure (roads, bridges, and lotteries) that has involved work performed by public employees that could be outsourced to companies the buyout firms control.

The percentage of unionization in the private sector has dropped below 8%, and two-thirds of public employees have no union either. In the health care and property services industries, 90% of workers have no union.

Virtually all population growth in the U.S. in the next 20 years will be in southern and western states where unionization is lowest. Those states increasingly will have an economic impact on pay and benefit standards for the nation, so if we don't help workers there unite to win improvements, pressure will be greater to reduce standards in the rest of the country.

Industries that are growing fastest generally are those with the least unionization. It takes huge amounts of resources to persuade some of the largest and most powerful corporations in the world to respect workers' rights, and yet...

While we have doubled spending on organizing in four years, we have not doubled results. Our spending to help each new worker join us has increased greatly, which jeopardizes our ability to unite more workers faster.

Spending per member on representation and other non-organizing activity increased significantly since 1999 but without clear increases in member satisfaction.

While many SEIU local unions are spending at least 20% of their budget on organizing, on average only 45% of the total 20% is being spent for that purpose. That is at least \$37 million that is badly needed to help pay for larger scale strategies.

The experiences of some of the major industrial, construction, and transportation unions are a stark reminder that SEIU cannot expect to win or maintain high union standards for just us, as an island in an increasingly nonunion economic sea. While not long ago SEIU was only 8% of America's union movement, by 2012 we will be 20% if current trends continue and other unions continue to decline. We have to work with our partners in Change to Win to unite the 50 million service workers in the U.S. whose jobs are difficult to move overseas – in transportation, retail, food production and distribution, construction, hospitality and tourism, as well as health care and property services.

A United National Plan to Unite Our Strength

The Justice for All Report contains recommendations developed by the SEIU Organizing Review Committee of local union and International Union leaders and staff, including the following:

A. Involve all local unions to jointly develop one national strategy for uniting more workers with us to win gains for working people on a much larger scale.

SEIU will have one strategy for uniting more workers and raising standards for all workers in our industries that is based on the integrated plans of each division, their locals, and the South-Southwest, and also includes opportunities and challenges that cross industries and regions. Local unions will continue to have organizing programs as part of an overall division plan. The overall SEIU strategy will include a number goal for the whole union, each division, the South-Southwest, cross division opportunities, and each local union and will be approved by the International Executive Board.

On Division Day— May 31, 2008—each Division of the International Union (Healthcare, Public and Property Services) adopted a Strategic Unity Plan to unite more workers in our industries. These goals have been formally reported to the convention delegates and are incorporated into our union's strategy.

By 2012, SEIU will have united more than 500,000 additional workers, the largest four-year increase in strength by any union in modern history. That will make SEIU the largest and strongest union that includes private sector workers that North America has ever seen, with more than 2.5 million members. It is also expected that if we are able to enact the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) with a new U.S. Congress and President we will unite a total of at least a million more workers by 2012.

Local union leaders will collaborate as national leaders for their industry to make a united national strategy for their division based on a long-term vision and an initial 4-year action program. Through the divisions, local unions will collectively decide – instead of deciding individually -- where to prioritize efforts for the best chance of large-scale gains for workers. Each division strategy will spell out how the International Union and local unions will blend their efforts, resources, and political, bargaining, and membership strength to win gains for more workers than any local union can win alone. Decisions will be made by consensus when possible, and by majority rule when necessary.

Every local union will set aside 20% of its post per capita budget to organizing in a separate fund. These local union resources will be blended with the Division's dedicated Unity Fund of at least \$12 million as the primary resources to carry out a Division's plan. That plan will include each local in order to maximize focus on where it will make the most difference in uniting more workers and changing workers' lives.

The International Union's resources will be used to implement the one national strategy approved by the International Executive Board rather than being automatically allocated in rigid percentages.

All levels of the union will be accountable for their contribution to the strategy. Once decisions are reached through the collaborative process, everyone will work together to carry them out.

There will be a regular union-wide review and evaluation of progress, leading to adjustments in resources as well in strategy.

B. Involve Current Members in Helping More Workers to Unite with Us for Everyone's Benefit

Involve far more members and other activists in our campaigns.

MOR (Member Organizing Reserves). SEIU members have been very effective at reaching out to not-yet-union counterparts who do similar work and are organizing to unite with us. MOR will be a new program to expand member involvement in organizing campaigns and will work with the divisions to help staff large campaigns primarily with member organizers.

SEIU Organizing Corps. This will be a new group of temporary organizers modeled after the Peace Corps or Teach for America. It will be aimed at people interested in doing social justice work for a portion of their life, but who are unsure of what work they want to do long term.

Give high priority to providing members the opportunity to go to nonunion locations or meet with not-yet-union workers.

Use our bargaining and political strength to unite more workers with us for everyone's benefit.

Mechanisms for involving current members to use their strength to help more workers at national employers to unite with us should be developed nationally through the divisions. Divisions may designate key strategic

global/national/regional employers or sectors/subsectors where a comprehensive union-wide strategy offers the potential for breakthroughs in uniting more workers and raising standards. In those cases, democratic procedures for negotiating those agreements are spelled out in Appendix B.

C. Help Build a Stronger Union Movement, as We are All Stronger Together

Help other unions in Change to Win to unite more workers in their industries.

Increase our capacity to conduct campaigns involving multinational corporations in other countries on behalf of members in SEIU and Change to Win industries.

Work with union allies in other countries to increase the capacity to unite workers to improve living standards and working conditions in common industries and multinational corporations.

Deepen the involvement of SEIU local union activists in SEIU's global work.

Track employer globalization trends in all SEIU divisions.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Convention delegates adopt the Resolution on "Uniting Working People to Change our Lives," and its recommendations herein.