



OPEIU LOCAL NO. 9

Newsletter



For Bulletin Board Posting

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PLEASE NOTE MEETING LOCATION

**General Membership
Meeting
Tuesday, November 15, 2011
5:00 p.m.**

**SEIU HCII
2nd Floor Meeting Room
209 West Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL**

**No December Membership
Meeting**

New Executive Board Member Appointed

President Candy Johnson announced her appointment of Claudia Geitz to fill the vacancy on the Executive Board. Claudia will serve as an At-large member of the Board until elections in 2013. Claudia works at Boilermakers Local 107 and previously served on the Executive Board. Welcome back Claudia.

46 Million Reasons to Tax the Rich

Republicans refuse to consider tax increases on the rich and have 46 million reasons to reconsider their position. There are now a record 46.2 million poor people in the United States, the most since the census began to track poverty in 1959. That's 1 of every 6

Americans, for an overall poverty rate of 15.1 percent, up from 14.3 percent the previous year.

Since 2007 the poverty rate has risen faster than any time since the early 1980's. Last year, the official poverty level was an annual income of \$22,314 for a family of four.

The number of Americans without health care was up as well, to 49.9 million people, or 16.3 percent according to the Census Bureau (yet another annual increase in numbers).

And the worst may be yet to come. Rising demand for food stamps this year as well as "staggeringly high" numbers among those unemployed for more than 26 weeks is likely to drive poverty levels even higher. The long-term unemployed—now more than 6 million people—are more likely to fall into poverty.

Government safety-net programs—targeted by Republicans in Congress—have often been one of the few things helping keep Americans out of poverty. Unemployment benefits that have given workers up to 99 weeks of payments after layoffs lifted 3.2 million above the poverty line, but ran out this year. The Census Bureau estimated that Social Security kept about 20.3 million—seniors as well as working-age adults receiving disability payments—out of poverty over the last three years.

President Obama is urging Congress to pay for a new jobs plan—which includes a proposed Social Security payroll tax cut and an extension of unemployment benefits—largely by increasing taxes on the wealthiest Americans, but Republicans have adamantly rejected this idea.

A Morally Corrupt System

By Jim Hightower

This will seem like a fairytale now, but not so long ago, it was actually possible for CEO pay to constitute “an embarrassment of riches.”

How quaint. Today, the riches are massive, but the embarrassment gene seems to have been completely bred out of corporate chieftains. They have no shame at producing negative results and offing thousands of underlings, then wheeling in a front-end loader to haul their own pay to the bank. The head man at Estee Lauder, for example, cut 2,000 employees but grabbed a huge salary increase and new stock payments worth more than \$24 million.

Are there no adults to supervise these corporate playgrounds and teach such concepts as humility and sharing? Well, technically, the board of directors is supposed to provide corporate governance, including setting the CEO pay. But who’s on these boards? Mostly other members of the corporate brotherhood who want to keep executive pay levels rising. And, of course, the chiefs themselves sit on their boards, usually chairing them.

The tale of boardroom coziness between directors and the bosses they supposedly govern was vividly revealed in the Wall Street crash of 2008. Far from providing any reasonable restraints, few board members even questioned the casino games the banks were running, and few yet objected to giving reckless bankers billions of dollars in unwarranted bonuses.

Now after the collapse, what has changed? Nothing. One survey of nine of the big banks we taxpayers bailed out shows that two-thirds of their failed board members are still there, and, once again, they’re shoveling inexplicably-huge bonuses at the same old CEOs.

A system that enriches executive elites while crushing the middle class is worse than an embarrassment—it’s morally untenable.

On the “Occupy” Movement

A quote from Joseph Stiglitz, Economist and Nobel Laureate, when speaking to the protesters in Zuccotti Park.

“You are right to be indignant. The fact is the system is not working right. It is not right that we have so many people without jobs when we have so many needs that we have to fill.

It is not right that we are throwing people out of their homes when we have so many homeless people.

Our financial markets have an important role to play. They’re supposed to allocate capital, manage risks. But they misallocated capital, and they created risk. We are bearing the cost of their misdeeds. There’s a system where we’ve socialized losses and privatized gains. That’s not capitalism; that’s not a market economy. That’s a distorted economy, and if we continue with that, we won’t succeed in growing and we won’t succeed in creating a just society.

WI Members Start to Prepare

November 15th marks the date that the official effort to recall Governor Scott Walker begins. There will be a tremendous effort put forward to get the necessary signatures so please sign the petition, circulate the petitions and encourage family and friends to join you in this effort. More information will be forthcoming.

As always if you have any problems do not hesitate to call or email the office.

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