

Reed initiative: New proposal, same attack on working families

Proposed ballot measure changed – still undermines retirement security, collective bargaining

San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed has submitted a new version of his anti-pension initiative that softens some illegal provisions but still gives public employers vast new powers to cut pension benefits for current employees.

Experts agree, it appears some of the changes were designed to give the measure a better chance of withstanding legal challenge and to give the misleading appearance that the measure is less radical than it really is. For example, the revised measure removes the requirement that the employer can

impose unilateral pension changes after 180 days of collective bargaining. However, the initiative still grants the employer broad new powers to impose cuts and restricts collective bargaining through other means.

The modified proposal, planned for the November 2014 ballot, would still repeal vested retirement security rights of public employees. If passed, the measure would allow government employers to cut, change or eliminate retirement benefits and/or retiree health care benefits of current employees.

The alternative to pension attacks: retirement security for all

By **Yvonne R. Walker**
President, SEIU Local 1000

Pension attacks, such as the current Reed proposal, pit worker against worker to distract from the real issue and further an ideological agenda.

Nearly half of all American workers have no access to a retirement plan at all, and risky 401(k)s have robbed millions of their nest eggs. So, politicians and billionaires point to workers with pensions and say, "Why should they have something you don't?" But they offer no solutions to help families worried about their own ability to plan for retirement. Nor do they stave off the economic crisis that has millions retiring into poverty or working until they die.

We need a solution that will strengthen our economy and measure up to the basic American value that if you work hard and play by the rules, you should be able to retire with some security and dignity. That's where California and Local 1000 are leading the way for the rest of the nation.

Last year, we fought for and Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law SB 1234, which starts the process of setting up the California Secure Choice Retirement Savings Program. If implemented through a second legislative act, Secure Choice would provide a voluntary

retirement savings plan for the 6.3 million California workers whose jobs offer no retirement benefits.

I am proud to serve on the board tasked with working out the details for responsibly implementing Secure Choice and Local 1000 members are organizing to give this new plan the support it needs to move forward. "Every Californian who works hard should have what we have – a retirement plan you can count on. That's what we're fighting for," said Manny Rodriguez, DLC 729 president who organized to pass SB 1234. "But if Reed gets his way, we're just in a race to the bottom."

Secure Choice alone will not solve all of our state's issues but if implemented, it will be a step towards retirement security for all. We must continue fighting for the retirement security of all Californians, and Mayor Reed and his billionaire backers should stop scapegoating working families and follow our lead.

Email retirementsecurity@seiu1000.org to join the fight for a secure retirement for all Californians.



Resource Center

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Wall Street repays CalPERS

Settlement represents a win for Local 1000 bank campaign

In a move demanded by Local 1000's bank campaign, JP Morgan Chase agreed to pay \$13 billion to settle federal legal action over the sale of toxic investments that ultimately caused the housing bubble to burst and cripple the economy.

"The efforts of Local 1000 members helped produce this historic victory."

-Tamekia N. Robinson
Vice President for Organizing/Representation

The settlement represents the largest single-company civil settlement in federal government history and includes nearly \$300 million in damages awarded to California retirement systems. \$261 million will go to CalPERS and \$19.5 million plus interest to CalSTRS to make up for money the pension funds lost in mortgage-backed securities sold or underwritten by JP

Morgan Chase. Nationally, the settlement also provides \$4 billion in relief for people who are underwater on their mortgages and \$7 billion in repayment to federally insured investors and four other states.

A joint state and federal investigation concluded that JP Morgan Chase, which received a \$94.7 billion taxpayer bailout in 2008, violated a number of laws by selling mortgage related investments that the bank's own analysts knew were troubled.

"This settlement reinforces exactly what we were saying earlier in May when we marched on JP Morgan Chase in Sacramento as part of a national day of action: Wall Street's reckless actions caused millions of Americans to lose their homes and their jobs," said Local 1000 Vice President for Organizing/Representation, Tamekia N. Robinson. "Local 1000's campaign to pressure JP Morgan Chase to repay CalPERS and taxpayers has succeeded. The bank has agreed to repay millions that was illegally taken – plus interest. The efforts of Local 1000 members helped produce this historic victory."

New safety program for Napa State Hospital

Local 1000 fights to protect members & sees results

A new Injury and Illness Prevention Program – developed with input from Local 1000 - will roll out over the next year at Napa State Hospital (NSH). Designed to improve the safety and well-being of NSH employees, the new program features education and training, risk assessments, safety inspections, comprehensive reporting and an emergency response and action plan.



Unit 17 Chair Kim Cowart

Employee safety is a constant concern for

members working at NSH, and Local 1000 has fought for years to implement policy changes to offer stronger protections. Those efforts intensified in 2010 when Donna Gross, a psychiatric technician, was strangled by an inmate. After this tragic incident, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (CalOSHA) cited NSH for several health and safety violations, and Local 1000 took steps that guaranteed our involvement in any changes made as a result.

"Our members deserve a safe work environment, and they shouldn't have to come to work every day and wonder if they are going to become a victim of assault," said Kim Cowart, chair of Bargaining Unit 17. "Our members rallied, participated in worksite actions and demanded protections. We are seeing results for our hard work. We are optimistic, and we will continue to work with CalOSHA to ensure the safety of our members."