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# UNION UPDATE



Craig Nelson speaking at a Secure Choice Board meeting

## Retirement Security for All Californians

### Local 1000 member shares struggles as retirement board designs relief plan

The Local 1000-supported goal of creating a retirement safety net for Californians with no workplace plan came nearer its goal on September 28 as the Secure Choice Retirement board considered detailed information about how that state-run plan should work. Local 1000 was there to make sure our members' voices are heard as important decisions are made on this groundbreaking program.

Local 1000 helped pass the legislation that created the Secure Choice Retirement Savings Program in 2012. The goal of the program is to cover the over six million Californians who lack access to employer-

sponsored retirement plans by providing access to a voluntary, low-risk, low-cost, portable retirement savings plan that encourages participation through automatic enrollment and facilitates contributions through payroll deductions.

The union's support of Secure Choice is a natural outgrowth of our commitment to ensuring retirement security, not just for our members, but for our family and community members whose financial well-being affects the entire state. Local 1000 President Yvonne R. Walker sits on the Secure Choice board, and members and staff are deeply involved in shepherding the program through to its goal.

To that end, member-activist Craig Nelson spoke at the recent event, sharing his and his family's retirement experiences. His story included how, before he became a state worker, he was laid off from a job and forced to make early withdrawals from a retirement account. Nelson also recounted how his parent's retirement has included incredibly high costs for long-term and health care expenses. Nelson's story impressed upon the board that, to ensure that funds will remain at the end of a worker's career, the final plan will need to be both financially robust and well-protected.

**“Our Purpose Statement compels us to work for economic justice, and until everyone can retire with security there will be no economic justice in California.”**

—Yvonne R. Walker, President, SEIU Local 1000

“In a perfect world, everyone would be able to save for retirement,” said Nelson. “But the econ-

omy we live in now is increasingly unstable for middle-class workers, and we never know when we may be laid off or have other financial emergencies.”

President Walker agrees, and stories such as Nelson's are exactly why she will be with Secure Choice every step of the way, crafting the plan to be the most dependable, fiscally-sound way to bring retirement security to the millions of Californians destined to retire in poverty without it.

“Our Purpose Statement compels us to work for economic justice,” said Walker, “and until everyone can retire with security there will be no economic justice in California.”

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# Members organize for workplace safety

## Emergency call light system repaired after a march on city hall

Thanks to the efforts of Local 1000 members advocating for patient safety at Salinas Valley State Prison (SVSP), the long-broken emergency call light system there has been repaired.

SVSP took action to get the call lights repaired. They took their concerns to Assemblymember Luis Alejo and Soledad Vice Mayor Alejandro Chavez and marched on Soledad City Hall.

Call lights, which alert nurses on duty to an emergency need of an inmate patient, have been broken for several years. The prison's stop-gap solution has been to assign a nurse to walk between rooms and visibly check for inmates in distress; that practice leaves about 15 life-threatening minutes between checks at current staffing levels. After their demands for a fix went unheeded by management, Local 1000 members at

"The repair of the call lights is a victory for the care of our patients," said Nick Mannion, DLC 741 chief steward and an LVN at SVSP. "This happened because our members saw a problem and took action."

But the call light repair is only part of the work the state needs to do: mandatory overtime and excessive workloads continue to threaten safety for patients and



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—Nick Mannion  
DLC 741 Chief Steward

staff. Margarita Maldonado, vice president for bargaining, says easing the punishing schedules and patient loads of our RNs LVNs and CNAs is a top priority for the union.

"Getting the call lights finally fixed was a big win," Maldonado said. "Local 1000 will continue the fight for patient safety and better working conditions for our members."

# Protecting upward mobility

## Steward helps force management to update personnel file

Local 1000 provides crucial representation to our members, not only at the bargaining table, but by backing up workers in the day-to-day interactions with management bureaucracy that can affect career advancement.

Steward Thomas Perine jumped at the chance to help his coworker. Perine and the member worked with Local 1000 staff to get management to agree to remove all outdated materials from the supervisor's file. After months of repeatedly engaging with management, the union prevailed and the member was able to witness the removal of the outdated performance documents and see them placed in a shredding bin.

"This case shows that when dealing with state managers, a little persistence, backed up with union power, can really get things done for our members."

—Thomas Perine, DLC 790 Steward

One of our members at Child Support Services recently experienced just that kind of support after coming to the union for assistance with getting management to remove outdated performance-related materials from his file. The contents of a state worker's supervisor's file can have a major impact on their ability to promote and take advantage of career opportunities.

"This case shows that when dealing with state managers," said Perine, "a little persistence, backed up with union power, can really get things done for our members."