

SEIU bureaucrats attempt to push through concession contract for library workers in Cleveland, Ohio

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The Service Employees International Union is pushing through a concessions contract to avoid a strike by about 900 library workers at 27 branches in Northeast Ohio.

Library workers are some of the lowest paid public service employees, and inflation over the last 4 years has left many living in poverty. Many Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL) employees currently earn roughly \$13 an hour.

Under terms of the contract, they would receive just a 65 cent raise in 2024, 55 cents in 2025 and just 42 cents in 2026, equal to wage hikes of 5, 4 and 3 percent. This is barely enough to keep pace with the current rate of inflation and does nothing to catch up with price increases in recent years. The only difference between this and management's initial offer is an extra 1 percent in 2024.

The SEIU worked hard to avoid a strike. The contract expired in March, but the union agreed to continue negotiations with the library system. Workers' anger forced a strike vote last month, which passed overwhelmingly.

Library workers must vote down the contract by the widest margin. But this will not convince the SEIU bureaucrats to fight. Instead, they must take control of their own struggle by building rank-and-file committees across the district's 27 branches. These democratically run organizations, independent of the official apparatus, would give workers the means to enforce their will and countermand any decisions by the bureaucrats that violate it.

Even within the system's existing budget, there is plenty of money to meet workers' demands. According to state audits, CCPL has seen a 45 percent growth in

revenue since 2007. In 2022 alone, the organization received \$94 million in revenue. Despite this substantial growth, the salaries of library workers in the district have relatively stayed the same, with some members making less than a living wage.

According to data from the SEIU, 40 percent of CCPL's employees have reached the top of their pay bands, and thus have no opportunities for raises based on seniority or experience. Many employees are hired at the highest wage they will ever receive in their career with the organization.

At a CCPL board meeting on June 25th, a library worker at one of the branches in the city of Parma publicly declared the membership's intentions behind the potential strike.

"We didn't enter the field of librarianship to strike it rich, our rejection of your proposals has not been a cash grab but a matter of dignity, self-respect and—to be perfectly frank—economic survival."

In a statement, the CCPL threatened that any wage increases above the measly \$2.4 million over three years from their original offer "would likely accelerate the need for additional local funding or layoffs."

The critical demands set forth by CCPL workers must be satisfied, but the bureaucrats who run the SEIU are refusing to organize a struggle. District 1199 alone has nearly 29,000 members across Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky across the healthcare industry, social services and the public sector. The SEIU has 2 million members nationwide. But it is doing nothing to mobilize its membership in support of the library workers.

SEIU has notoriously carried out countless betrayals against its membership. The bureaucracy was recently

accused of suppressing votes during a contract ratification for nearly 100,000 government workers in Southern California In September in 2023. In March of 2023, the SEIU settled on a deal that cheated nearly 50,000 education workers in Los Angeles out of livable wage increases.

In the height of COVID in 2023, the SEIU turned a blind eye when thousands of healthcare and janitorial workers in Minnesota voiced demands for increases in poverty-level wages and solutions to life-threatening work conditions due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the union has pledged \$200 million to Biden's presidential campaign. It issued a statement endorsing the senile warmonger the same day he announced his re-election bid.

As a part of the administration's campaign, Vice President Kamala Harris was invited to be the keynote speaker at the SEIU convention in May. In an effort to promote a "pro-worker" narrative to gain votes from the union membership, Harris declared in her address, "We are protecting the sacred right to organize because we know when unions are strong, America is strong."

Biden himself was more truthful last week during a visit with the AFL-CIO executive council, where he referred to the trade unions as "my domestic NATO." This means he sees the bureaucracy as a means of suppressing rank-and-file anger and preparing the country for war.



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