

Reject the SEIU-LA County sellout agreement! Form rank-and-file committees to expand the struggle!

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In the face of rising living costs, relentless inflation, chronic understaffing, privatization and deteriorating working conditions, 55,000 Los Angeles County workers have every reason to reject the rotten tentative agreement announced by SEIU Local 721 and Los Angeles County.

This common language agreement is not a step forward. It amounts to a calculated maneuver by the capitalist state, in collusion with the pro-corporate union bureaucracy, to suppress the growing militancy of the working class and impose austerity in the name of “budget stability.”

The two-day strike at the end of April emerged from dire and worsening conditions. After years of stagnating wages and massive inflation, LA County workers—nurses, social workers, sanitation employees, library staff and others—have seen their real incomes shrink while their workloads ballooned.

Chronic understaffing has pushed services to the brink, forcing workers to do the jobs of two or three people. Many labor under unsafe conditions, especially those who continued working during the pandemic, often without adequate protection. Some died. Their sacrifices have been met with budget cuts, outsourcing and contempt.

Meanwhile, private contractors rake in profits from services that once belonged to the public, and county officials praise their “partnership with labor” as they funnel public money into corporate hands. The drive to “modernize” public services is a smokescreen for privatization and union-busting. And SEIU has proven itself a loyal accomplice.

This sellout takes place under the shadow of a broader social crisis. The Trump regime, in its fascistic drive to consolidate dictatorial power, is overseeing a nationwide assault on what remains of the social safety net.

War and repression are taking place at home and abroad. The ruling class is turning to authoritarianism to

contain the class struggle and preserve its rule, as demonstrated by the police repression, the immigrants’ deportations and the paramilitary deployments in cities across the country.

The mass demonstrations of June 14, in which millions expressed their outrage over inequality, austerity and authoritarianism, prove that the social divide is reaching a breaking point. Within this context, the SEIU tentative agreement goes well beyond a local betrayal. It is part of an effort to suppress working class resistance.

LA County’s own press release admits the true purpose of the agreement: to “avoid a structural deficit” and “maintain budget predictability.” What this means in practice is that the ruling class is planning to balance the budget on the backs of workers, while shielding contractors, investors and corporations from any disruption.

The agreement does the following:

Offers a front-loaded \$7,000 over two years in one-time bonuses—cash that will be gone in months, with no impact on future wage or pension or benefit calculations.

- Imposes meager permanent wage increases: just 2 percent in year two and 5 percent in year three—well below the rate of inflation.

- Preserves the county’s long-term suppression of labor costs by limiting obligations for pensions and benefits.

- Contains funding through cuts to social programs and public services, while refusing to tax the rich or cut corporate subsidies.

This cannot even be called a compromise. It ensures that wages will fall further behind the cost of living, that workloads will increase, and that public services will continue to be gutted.

LA County government gets what it really wants: “labor peace.” By halting the strike, SEIU has suppressed the

most powerful weapon workers have: their collective ability to withhold labor. The bureaucrats who run the union are celebrating a deal that protects no one but their own political connections and the financial health of the capitalist state.

The county's insistence on "fiscal predictability" reveals its true priorities. With \$4 billion in payouts for the AB 218 sexual abuse settlements and billions more needed for wildfire recovery, officials are not turning to the wealthy or corporations to pay the bill. Instead, they are making "targeted cuts" to social programs—parks, libraries, summer programs, pet adoptions—turning public services into sacrificial offerings on the altar of credit ratings and investor confidence.

LA County's own statement says these cuts are "necessary" to provide "fair compensation." In other words: if workers want crumbs, the public must starve. The ruling class is pitting workers against the communities they serve, creating a false choice between wage suppression and service preservation, when in fact the resources exist, but are hoarded by the financial oligarchy.

The entire budget crisis is a manufactured outcome of capitalism's failure to meet social needs. Federal cuts, natural disasters and economic instability are not acts of God—they are consequences of a profit-driven system that prioritizes war, speculation, repression and corporate enrichment over housing, health care and education.

SEIU Local 721's role in this debacle must be named for what it is: treachery. The union's function is not to organize a real fight but to ensure labor discipline. It markets this deal as a "victory," while helping the county government suppress strikes, enforce austerity, and disguise its betrayal in the language of "shared sacrifice." The removal of the so-called "poison pill" clause—a provision that would have allowed future wage cuts—is a symbolic gesture meant to distract from the overall regression of the agreement.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, composed almost entirely of Democrats, exemplifies the role of the Democratic Party in administering the economic agenda of the ruling class. Under its leadership, wage constraints, budget reductions, and the prioritization of bondholders have been central to county policy.

This arrangement reflects the disciplined enforcement of austerity through a political apparatus that markets itself as progressive. SEIU's alignment with this structure situates the union bureaucracy within the machinery responsible for advancing these measures, reinforcing the

stability of the existing order through managed opposition.

Although no specific dates for the ratification vote have been announced, this tentative agreement should be overwhelmingly rejected by the rank and file.

Workers must take control of their own struggle by forming independent rank-and-file committees—democratically controlled organizations outside the grip of the union bureaucracy. These committees must unite workers across sectors and job titles and link up with broader struggles across the state and country, preparing for a general strike.

The following counter-demands must be advanced immediately:

- **Real wage increases** of 30 percent over 3 years, retroactive to the start of negotiations.

- **Permanent cost-of-living adjustments** tied to real inflation rates, not one-time bonuses.

- **Fully funded pensions and benefits**, with no concessions to "long-term liability" arguments.

- **No layoffs!** Full employment for all current employees.

- **End to outsourcing and privatization**, with all contracted-out work brought in-house at union wages.

- **Safe staffing levels**, with mandatory hiring to end burnout and overwork.

- **Full funding for public services**—no cuts to parks, libraries, health clinics, or community programs.

- **Emergency pandemic compensation** and full recognition for frontline sacrifices during COVID-19.

- **Rank-and-file oversight** over all future negotiations and strike actions.

- **Break with the Democratic Party** and all capitalist politicians—build a political movement of, by, and for the working class.

The time for illusions is over. The crisis workers face is not a temporary budget shortfall. The world is faced with war and dictatorship as the expressions of a decaying capitalist system that has no future for the working class. The only path forward lies through class struggle, independent organization and the fight for socialism.

Reject the deal! Build the committees! Take the road of struggle!



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