

SEIU Local 888 Convention Resolution #3

Submitted by: Jorge Vargas, on behalf of the Latino Caucus

Establish a Membership Bill of Health Rights

Recommended by the SEIU Local 888 Executive Board and adopted by a vote of the membership at the SEIU Local 888 Biannual Convention on October 24, 2020

Whereas: Our members have the right to freedom of speech and assembly, to voice their concerns to their employers or to their union if they feel that their health or wellbeing is being compromised, or their concerns are not being addressed; and

Whereas: Encourage open discourse between members and their elected officials, and hope to empower our membership to voice their opinions. This includes any and all discourse regarding decisions made in regards to the pandemic, specifically in regards to protocols for each work environment. As each environment is different, members of each workplace should have an active say in establishing these procedures to best fit their safety needs; and

Whereas: Acknowledge that our members should never be put in harm's way. Members should not be asked to perform a job or task that goes beyond the duties outlined in their collective bargaining agreement. Our rights and benefits were hard fought. The current health crisis should not be used as an excuse to ignore them. Furthermore, if there are changes that affect our contract and/or job conditions, a union representative should be present and a vote by the members should be required; and

Whereas: Recognize that a reliable and accredited source for protection against COVID-19 is the Center for Disease Control (CDC). We propose that the CDC's Facilities COVID-19 Screening shall be adopted as a template to be filled out by each union member upon entering their place of work, to verify that they have not contracted the virus; and

Whereas: Understand that uniform standards regarding increased social distancing, staggered work shifts, protocols for immediately isolating people who have signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19, standardized rules for temperature taking, delivering services remotely when able, and other exposure-reducing measures need to be implemented across all jurisdictions; and

Whereas: Identify that workplace safety against the current health crisis should be an extension of our natural membership rights. To accommodate these rights, we should consider the installation of automatic wall-mounted non-contact infrared thermometers, the issuance of personal protective equipment (PPE) and the installation of proper ventilation and physical barriers where necessary across all workplaces. Monthly meetings regarding safety measures should also be implemented, until the risks of the virus are mitigated; and

Whereas: Understand that working remotely is not always possible. Basic infection prevention measures shall be provided at all work sites, to promote adequate hygiene and prevention practices. This includes the implementation of standardized handwashing and facemask signage, providing alcohol-based sanitizers when soap and water is not immediately available, providing tissues and trash receptacles, and encouraging workers to stay home if they're feeling sick.

Therefore be it resolved: To protect our members against the severe risks that the COVID-19 pandemic presents, we shall develop a comprehensive Bill of Health Rights to establish best practices and universal codes of conduct in our workplaces amidst these ongoing threats, both to our health and to the wellbeing of our union members.