

Emerson staff net first pact

Campaign gets college to take merit pay off bargaining table

Members of the Emerson Staff Union voted *unanimously* to ratify their first collective bargaining agreement with the college—a four-year pact that guarantees across-the-board raises of 14.5 percent over the life of the



HOLLAND

contract, new commuter benefits, strong "just cause" job protections, a sick bank and a broad parental leave policy.

"I'm proud of the agreement we reached," said **Jacqueline Holland**, assistant director of Academic Support, with 18 years of service. "We worked hard to end the favoritism and

inequities created by a merit pay system. Instead, we established across-the-board raises that are fair and commensurate with the work we do."

See page 4 for more on Emerson



GETTING THEIR SAY: Statewide SEIU members and leaders questioned U.S. Rep. **Michael Capuano**, left, and Boston City Councilor **Ayanna Pressley** at a candidates forum for the 7th Congressional District race. The event was at Local 1199's headquarters in Quincy. The two will face off in the Democratic primary in September.

Should Local 888 endorse a candidate in the 7th Congressional District? Let your voice be heard by going to the link below:

<https://goo.gl/forms/l2l14ahmiDkGh00h2>

UMass Lowell members OK contract

Local 888 members at the University of Massachusetts Lowell approved a one-year contract in May – capping a successful campaign that included petitioning the governor and Legislature for fair cost-of-living increases.

Nicholas Piscitello, chapter chair, said he was happy with the agreement, which includes cost-of-living increases of up to 2 percent retroactive to July 17 of last year. The full increase is

conditional on the state meeting its revenue targets, meaning tax collections and the like.

"The biggest challenge that is preventing the university and the union from reaching a three-year pact is that the governor is not committing to fund the salary increases over the next three years," said Piscitello. "The one-year pact allows

See page 4 for more on Lowell

SEIU locals put focus on U.S. rep. race

SEIU members living in the 7th Congressional District have a big choice to make in September's Democratic primary. Boston City Councilor **Ayanna Pressley** is challenging incumbent U.S. Rep. **Michael Capuano**. The seat covers much of Boston, Cambridge and Milton and all of Chelsea, Everett, Randolph and Somerville.

The two spoke and answered audience questions at a candidates forum held at SEIU 1199's Quincy headquarters.



McKEEVER

Before the event, **Darrin Howell**, a candidate for state representative in the Sixth Suffolk District, said he didn't see that the two candidates were very different on their stances on the big issues. So Howell said, "I want to learn what approaches to moving the needle forward they present. I want to get residents involved; it's all about taking their voices to the decision-makers."

Howell has picked up the endorsement of SEIU Locals 888 and 1199, where he previously worked as a political organizer.

During the candidates forum, SEIU Local 888 Secretary-Treasurer **Tom McKeever** peppered the two candidates with questions on big statewide campaigns – such as the proposed millionaire's tax and the Fight For \$15 minimum wage campaign.

SEIU 1199 member **Smith Lamothe** played the role of emcee, calling on audience members to ask questions. Lamothe, who works at Boston Medical Center, said that, "We, the members, are in the driver's seat. We are the driving force behind this endorsement process."

Capuano pointed to his numerous union endorsements and "proven track record" in Congress as reasons the state's SEIU union locals should endorse him. "I'm the one who knows how to stand up to Donald Trump."

He played up his immigrant family roots, saying it gives him a strong emotional tie to the so-called "Dreamers," young adults who were brought to the U.S. as children – and who President Obama moved to protect from deportation.

"Voting the right way is not enough," Pressley said, adding that "these times require activist leadership." Pressley said she personally relates to the issues of addiction and mass incarceration that too many in the congressional district suffer from. Her father landed in prison due to his drug addiction. Reforms are needed, she said. "The main driver of recidivism is unemployment."

For longer article, see <http://www.seiu888.org/>

Throwing hat in ring

"I'm passionate about public service," said longtime SEIU Local 888 member **Alexcy Vega**. Now, Lawrence's chief assessor wants to use his skills to take charge of the Northern Essex Register of Deeds office – and to clean it up.

"We need to get the career politicians out of this office," said Vega. "It is time to see how an assessment official, a true public servant, can improve on what we have now."

Vega has served Lawrence as an assessor for 18 years, rising through the ranks. He was the city's first Hispanic to work as an assessor and would be the first to hold the position of register at the office, which is in Lawrence.



VEGA

He said that he'd eyed the office of register for years, seeing it as a natural extension of his work as an assessor. "I know the ins-and-outs of that department.

This is a position where I can hit the ground running."

See page 4 for more on politics



TALKING SHOP: Local 888 President Brenda Rodrigues speaks with members during her recent visit to the Chelsea Soldiers Home.

Big vote at Chelsea Home

Two candidates going toe-to-toe in the Local 888 race to become unit chair at the Chelsea Soldiers Home is an outstanding example of union democracy in action. **Spelandilove Nelson**, a certified nursing assistant originally from Ghana, has worked at the facility since 2004. **Leonard DiBartolomeo** has worked at the Chelsea Home for 2 ½ years and is the campus police chief. The vote will be June 12 and 14.

Both have stepped up to seek leadership at the Chelsea Home in the wake of the recent Local 888 election that ushered in the Leadership for a Changing Times slate. After the election, the Chelsea Home's previous chapter chair and vice chair resigned.

Newly elected Local 888 President Brenda Rodrigues and her slate want members to get involved, build stronger relationships and take more leadership in their workplaces. The Chelsea Home has 223 union members.

Nelson said she wants to bring "Changing Times" to the Chelsea Home. "If we come together as union members, we can affect lasting change."

DiBartolomeo echoes her call for change. "If we have the right number of stewards and the right stewards we can make a difference."

Both said that grievances – including their own – have been mishandled, or simply not taken care of, under previous unit leaders.

In the past, Nelson said, "members felt neglected and taken for granted" by their representatives. "People who file grievances should hear about them in a timely manner," she said. "And they should be treated equally, regardless of race, language, gender – or whatever."

DiBartolomeo said that, while serving in the Army for 11 years he worked closely with people from a wide range of racial backgrounds and national origin. He said he has a track record of helping people as a campus officer.



FOR THE DEFENSE: Public defenders want the same union rights as all other state workers.

Lawyers fight for rights

Massachusetts public defenders met after their state agency's May conference in Worcester – to talk up their ongoing drive to win collective bargaining rights, which all other state workers already have by law.

Local 888 President **Brenda Rodrigues** urged the public defenders to keep up the fight. "Local 888 has supported you from the beginning and will continue to support you."

The lawyers are calling on the state Legislature to amend the law. MassDefenders and their supporters have rallied across the state in recent months for their rights – holding signs saying "Give us a voice!" and "Support H. 1426." This refers to the Massachusetts House bill, which has gained support among a huge majority of legislators but gotten stuck in committee.

Plugged into politics

- **Merrimack Valley State Legislative Candidate Forum** June 16, Sat., 1:30 p.m., sponsored by the SEIU State Council along with Locals 888, 509, 32BJ, 1199 and SEIU Community Action; North Essex Community College, Lawrence.
- **COPA** meeting, June 21, Thurs., 6 p.m., , 11 Lawrence St., Lawrence. See <http://www.seiu888.org/> for updates.

Member runs for register

Continued from page 2

"I can bring a lot more to the job than the incumbent," said Vega. He said he wants the office, which has 14 employees, to become a one-stop resource information center for homeowners and businesses.

The incumbent, **Paul Iannuccillo**, is the kind of office holder who makes politicians, if not public servants, look bad. Lawrence's Eagle-Tribune newspaper conducted an award-winning, six-month investigation of his work habits. The conclusion: He spent less than four hours a day in the Lawrence register's office while earning a \$109,601 salary funded by taxpayers.

For more information on Alexcy Vega, see <http://www.vote4vega.com/>

UMass Lowell's new pact

Continued from page 1

the university to continue to work with state government officials to ensure the increases for the next two years are funded completely."

The university will not agree to the future raises at this point, since it may lack needed funding.

The contract also allows "exempt" employees to get compensation time if they are required to report to campus during a closure due to weather. Also, "nonexempt" employees will be paid overtime after working 40 hours in a week after a request is reviewed.

About 580 members are united in the Local 888 Professional Administrative Chapter.

Emerson staff win 1st contract

Continued from page 1

The contract covers about 170 clerical, technical and professional employees at Emerson College who perform a variety of jobs critical to the success of the college. The Emerson Staff Union was formed with support from SEIU Local 888 in 2015. Workers won an NLRB-supervised union representation election in April 2016.

The contract creates stability, predictability and a new standard for employee relations at Emerson College.

Even before the contract was ratified, the staff union won important improvements to their working conditions. When the union exposed that women were paid less to do the same jobs as men in the same department, administrators raised the women's salaries. The administration also moved everyone up from the lowest pay grade and then eliminated it.

"Our members showed their determination to win long-overdue job improvements by protesting at college events, circulating petitions, and staying united on the job," said **Estelle Ticktin**, administrative assistant to the chair of Communication Sciences and Disorders, with five years of service. "We enlisted support from our students, other Emerson campus unions, other higher-ed unions, and members of SEIU. That support and solidarity was essential to winning a good contract."

For a longer version of this article, see <http://www.seiu888.org/>.

Coming Attractions



The Local 888

Listening Tour

featuring President **Brenda Rodrigues** and Secretary-Treasurer **Tom McKeever** comes to Lowell on Tues., June 19, 5:30-7:00 p.m., at the United

Teachers of Lowell, 169 Merrimack St. No. 4. For more info, call 617-241-3300.

