

June 1, 2020

Union 
Update

OPEIU
Local 

A message from your Union during these troubled times

Dear OPEIU Local 8 Members,

The horrible events of last week spotlight how broken our nation is as we suffer through a worldwide pandemic with over 100,000 deaths and at least 40 million Americans out of work. We watched a white woman threaten incarceration to an unarmed African American male in a public park, the brutal suffocation of an unarmed black man by 4 policemen on a city street and an unarmed black reporter arrested while performing his job on national television. The week ended with an explosion of protests across the country.

In Seattle on Saturday, we saw unprecedented violence and destruction on downtown streets. Cars were burned, buildings were vandalized and looting prevailed. Yet two blocks away from this criminal mayhem, thousands of other protesters were gathered peacefully to share their grief and pray for change. We can't let the smoke and destruction by a few instigators distract us from what changes are needed to bring the country together and heal.

Back to "normal" can not be the way it's been! Too many disparities exist today – in housing, in healthcare, in education, in job opportunities and in public safety. Black, Indigenous and other people of color suffer these disparities the most. Institutional racism must be recognized and ended. Genuine police reform must be non-negotiable.

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."
-- President Barack Obama

We know as Union members that there is strength and power when we band together. Local 8 activists, leaders and staff have learned firsthand how to achieve change by raising our voices, mobilizing our support and employing direct action. It's clear to me that we can't wait for the current politicians in Washington D.C. to create solutions. They appear tone deaf to the true needs of a fractured America.

The anger and frustration that so many of us feel won't go away without change. But as President Obama once said, *"Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."* Perhaps the tragedies of last week will be the catalyst for change in this world of chaos.

"Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged"

We can no longer stand-by in silence. People are sick and tired of the inequities and injustices we see every day committed against our young, our homeless, our poor and disenfranchised. Our Union strives to attain

as those who are.”
-- Benjamin Franklin

fairness in the workplace and social equity in our communities. Our leaders on the Executive Board and in the workplace stand united in the fight against systemic racism.

We have the opportunity to make real change by loudly speaking out against discrimination. We must elect representatives at the local, state and federal levels that will truly respect and protect all citizens. We can ensure our voices are heard by responding to the US Census and registering voters for the upcoming elections. We can promote healing and work to change for the better. George Floyd deserved that as do all the lost brothers and sisters before him. No justice, no peace.

I wish you and your family safety and health.

In unity,

Suzanne Mode
Business Manager

Visit our website



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