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AUGUST 2018

SUB^oVOICE

Health Care for Subs

**Be Part of Our
Campaign**

Seattle Education Association (SEA) has begun to bargain with Seattle Public Schools over a new contract. The Seattle Substitutes Association wants to make sure the needs of subs are met.

Seattle Public Schools depends on flexible subs who can help out whenever needed. That's part of a high quality education. The system relies on subs not just for long term positions of 60 days or more, but for all the shorter gaps that we fill every day as well. **And we need – as does every human being – reliable, high quality healthcare.** Right now, subs need to work 60 consecutive days in the same position to get health care. This is an unreasonably high bar that results in most regular working subs not receiving health benefits. We demand that 15 days in a pay period (a month) is enough to

qualify for three months of health care. Be part of our campaign and help us win. How?

Send an email to seattlesubs@gmail.com and we'll contact you, right away for our next meetings and action!

What we plan to do: Call all subs to inform them what's going on, mobilize to meetings of the bargaining teams, inform other teachers about our demands and discuss with them within the framework of the overall demands for the contract. We want to keep you in the loop about every step of the negotiations and mobilize whenever needed to make sure, that through building solidarity amongst all educators and much beyond we can develop the strength we need to win!

Dear Educators,

Healthcare is a human right. But to make this a reality, we have to organize and build a movement. Without pressure from below, working people will continue to struggle more and more to meet their everyday needs. On top of that, we have the powerful pharmaceutical and insurance industry against us. They have billions, they have the politicians they bought - but the labor movement could mobilize millions to fight back.

We can see in the midterm elections throughout the country that candidates running on a platform that includes Medicare For All are winning. Campaigns all across the country are demanding healthcare, free at the point of delivery.

Educators can play a special role in driving this process forward. The issue that united educators statewide in West Virginia was initially cuts to the state's health insurance policy. Through united action, they were able to halt these criminal reforms.

I see our Healthcare for Subs Campaign as part of this bigger movement.

In order to win, we are going to need to pull together all our resources and building support outward from the Sub Association to all educators, families, and the community. We need to build a movement, not just for healthcare, but for the fight ahead to build better schools and a better world, based on economic, racial and gender justice.

In Solidarity,

*Stan Strasner, Seattle Substitutes
Association Vice President*

What we have

**Required work
60 consecutive days at the same
job**

→ 3 months of health care

**Most subs don't qualify for health
benefits**

**Impossible to have continuous
health coverage**

What we need

**Regular work at any job
= 15 days in one pay period,
not necessarily in the same job**

→ 3 months of health care

**Most regular working subs qualify
for health benefits**



**Continuous coverage
for regular subs**

For-Profit Healthcare Makes Me Sick

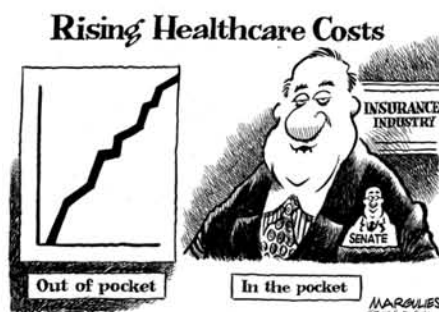
By Whitney Kahn, Paraeducator Sub

In the US, our healthcare is sickening. It's the most expensive in the world and, at the same time, millions remain uninsured. For me, this is personal. I'm a paraeducator sub with type 1 diabetes. My basic costs without insurance are over \$1500/month! My medication is a life or death issue, but I've been denied coverage because I couldn't pay the rising rates.

So why is healthcare so expensive in the US? Well, there are the pharmaceutical corporations which spend more on advertising than on research (Washington Post, 2/11/15). Their massive profits, 20¢ of every dollar you spend, go right into the pockets of the billionaires who own those companies (BBC, 11/6/14). Then there's the parasitic insurance industry that creates nothing and takes so much. Our rates keep rising while the executives and billionaire shareholders rake in billions from our premiums. Then they nickel-and-dime us when we get sick and need coverage. So how do we achieve healthcare for all?

Obamacare was a big step forward, especially for those of us with pre-existing con-

ditions.. Unfortunately, the profit-seeking corporate model is still driving people into bankruptcy. The rate-hikes open doors for Trump and Republicans to undermine support and take us back to the wild west of healthcare.



However, I don't see the Democrats in Washington, Oregon, and California building a blue wall of healthcare for all. Most of them take money from those corporations as well. We need to build a lasting solution, and the only one that has ever worked has been public healthcare.

In Canada in the 1960s, labor unions joined much of the rest of the world in launching their own party: the New Democratic Party.

Through a combination of movement-building and electoral success independent of corporate money or influence, universal healthcare was implemented nationally.

The Canadian experience shows the importance of linking up workers' struggles on the ground with building an independent political party that can challenge big business for power. The billionaire class will grant reforms only when it feels threatened by a mass movement. While each right-wing government has attempted to attack and underfund Canada's public healthcare just as they attack public education here in the US, none of them has been able to undo this massively popular system.

A strong labor movement, unafraid to fight for the interests of all working people against billionaires who hoard wealth in offshore accounts at our expense, is what won us discrimination protections, workplace safety, social security, weekends, an end to child labor, medicare, medicaid, and so much more. We in SEA can play a critical role. Our fight to get healthcare for subs should be linked to making healthcare, housing, and higher ed human rights for all.

We represent YOU!

President: **Peter Henry**
Vice President: **Stan Strasner**
Past President: **Pat Robertson**
Secretary/Treasurer: **Elisabeth Lavaris**
Professional Development: **Jan Bowersox**

Communications: **Karin Engstrom**
At Large SEA Board Member: **Justin Vinson**
District Liaison: **David Posner**
SEA Uniserv Representative: **Tim Kopp**

Association Representatives 2017-18 School Year
• **Helen Anschell**
• **Josh Harper**
• **Darrin Hoop**
• **Karen Jackson**
• **Devin Last**
• **Roberta Lindeman**

• **Matthew Maley**
• **Rickie Malone**
• **Joyce McDonald**
• **Molly O'Neil**
• **Ida Ott**
• **Karen Ritter**
• **Edith Ruby**
• **Francisca Zavala**

• **Linda Zbigley**
Communications Committee:
• **Karin Engstrom**
• **Robert McKay**
• **Molly O'Neil**
• **Stan Strasner**

Contact us: seattlesubs@gmail.com





What We Want

Five Key Issues Flowing from our Sub Bargaining Survey 2018

By Peter Henry, President, Seattle Substitutes Association, June 29, 2018

Thank you to the 171 subs who participated in our bargaining survey in April. It will come as no surprise that there was an overwhelming response to the questions on compensation and health coverage. Several other issues received substantial support. Here are a few:

☛ Sick Leave

It's great that for the first time ever all subs receive and can use sick leave. We earn sick leave at the rate of 1 hour per 40 hours worked. But for regular full-time employees the rate is about double. Subs feel strongly it's important to have parity with everyone else who works for SPS.

☛ Professional Development

Relevant professional development is another issue with deep support. Job-specific training is very important to all three categories of subs (Certs, Paras and SAEOPs)

☛ AESOP

We need to know what a job entails to determine if it's a match for us. Subs feel strongly that detailed job information must be posted in AESOP. Another AESOP-related issue with widespread support is allowing classroom teachers to in-

put their desired sub directly without having to go through their admin secretary. This has been a real problem this year because jobs get posted to AESOP even when a teacher has a particular sub they want, and the sub who picks up the job from AESOP is dropped.

☛ Payroll

Payroll-related issues gaining large support include a demand for SPS to join the 21st century with electronic timekeeping, and a demand for sufficient documentation so we can verify our pay.

☛ Racial Justice

We are also strongly in support of issues to make Seattle schools more equitable. We believe there should be race and equity teams in all schools, all schools should use restorative justice practices to reduce disproportionate discipline, there should be consistent student discipline practices across the district, and all schools should implement ethnic studies – which has been shown to increase engagement and accomplishment for many students.

☛ Get Involved!

Will we get everything we want? Well ... it's bargaining ... but we can maximize our gains by showing strength and solidarity. Please stay informed and engaged!

Subs Health Care Stories

Broken Promises

Subs in long term positions don't make the 60 days, if you are absent the job number changes and you start over at day one. I have had this happen more than once. So I don't take long term jobs anymore. Seems like broken promises.

Midori Vance

70 Hours Per Week

Health benefits for substitute teachers would make a huge difference in my life. I am an active substitute teacher working most days of the week, yet I must also maintain full time hours for a different employer in order to qualify for health care! I end up working about 70 hours or more per week during the school year! At an age when I should be slowing down (62), I am compelled to keep up this exhausting schedule.

If reasonably priced health care benefits were available to me through Seattle Public Schools, the quality of my life would improve dramatically, as I'd be able to quit the second job and make subbing my focus.

Elizabeth A. Lannin

Not Just

I started subbing in 2004. Every year, I work 178 to 180 days. I never get benefits or free healthcare. I pay \$550 every month, plus \$54 every month for the dentist. People who work in a 0.5 position, half a day, get benefits and healthcare. I work 180 days, the other person works half of my time, 90 days. They get the benefits, I don't.

I do not feel that is just.

Said Lahlou



Not Able to Sub?

I pay my own insurance and not sure if I will be able to consider subbing in Seattle as to the cost.

Debra Rose

Healthcare is a Necessity

My family of four recently went on the state exchange for healthcare. My husband is a small business owner and we have no other healthcare options. We are left with "Obamacare". But what is that? Our bill on the exchange exceeds \$40,000, more than I earn for an entire year!

Even with that whopping premium, my son's recent visit to the emergency room was more than \$12,000. Luckily he didn't have an appendicitis as it first appeared, only a kidney stone. The bill for the diagnosis and pain killer? More than \$12,000. With my insurance, I still have to pay \$2,000 out of pocket. A gigantic price tag for a few hours in an ER and a painkiller. With a better plan, collectively negotiated, I'm sure I would have much more reasonable rates and better coverage.

I'm sure many people assume that substitutes should just get their insurance from somewhere else, spouses, Medicare, colleges, etc. Really that notion keeps tons of qualified substitutes from serving our students. Seattle is a hot job market, healthcare is a necessity. I hope that the district could provide all substitutes the right to purchase insurance at the rate they pay for it, and prorate those premium charges for actual levels of service.

Most substitutes are unable to work full time. Why not provide healthcare commensurate with the level of service these employees are actually able to give to the district?

Lauren Feaux

Subs Win Healthcare in Milwaukee!

Interview with Alex Brower, Milwaukee Sub Association President

By Stan Strasner

Public schools have been under a vicious attack from right wingers for decades in Wisconsin. But recently, the Milwaukee Substitutes Association built a campaign that won healthcare for regular working substitutes in Milwaukee School District!

This victory was won after months of organizing that greatly strengthened the association as a tool for the sub to fight for their interests. I talked on the phone with Alex to hear how they did it.

Stan: Hey Alex! Great to chat with you again. We just got done with a day at the bargaining table with the district and aim to get healthcare for subs. How did you win in Milwaukee?

Alex: You can get a legally binding contract with them? That's great. Scott Walker took away collective bargaining here. We don't have that. You can discuss details, have details written in sentences, and then hold them to it. Your situation,

that's awesome. We don't have that.

Stan: So what is your situation in Milwaukee Public Schools?

Alex: The Betsy DeVos experiment is in full fruition here. Only half of school age children attend public school here. We have had the slow and steady decline of public education for a long time.

Stan: So how did you win healthcare for subs? Can you tell me about the door-knocking you did in the community to build support for healthcare for subs?

Alex: We went into full battle mode. We got petitions. We went door to door. People are really supportive of education. We collected signatures, both on paper and online petitions.

Stan: And there was a hunger strike? Can you tell me about that?

Alex: I went on a hunger strike for 21 days. I got inspiration from Chicago where community activists on the south side of Chicago held a hunger strike for



"We went into full battle mode. We got petitions. We went door to door. People are really supportive of education."

34 days to stop the closure of Dyett High School.

Stan: What advice would you give to subs in Seattle fighting for healthcare?

Alex: I implore you to put direct actions like a petition or a hunger strike into your bargaining strategy. Direct action gets the goods.

Together a Force

NEA Report

By Karin Engstrom

Peter Henry, Jan Bowersox, Rickie Malone, Doris Brevoort and I were the elected substitute representatives in the Seattle Delegation to the NEA Representative Assembly (RA), June 30th to July 5th, in Minneapolis. Our hotel was within walking distance of the Mall of America, but a 30-minute bus ride to the Convention Center downtown.

This is my third RA and as always, the day's agenda is packed. From 7 to 9am, the Washington Caucus met for a briefing and review of items up for vote in the assembly. This was our chance to meet and work with people from our state.

Imagine a hall with 6,200 delegates and many NEA staff to keep things running. Members from several tribes opened the RA with story, blessings and song. NEA President Lily Eskelsen-Garcia ran a tight ship from 10 am to 6 pm or later during the 4-day Assembly. There was little time for sight seeing or shopping! There was lots of reading.

We voted on amendments and proposed additions to the NEA Constitution, By-laws, Standing Rules, Resolutions, Legislative Amendments, and Policy Statements. 130 New Business Items (NBI's) were debated and voted upon. Subjects of NBI's ran the gambit, from immigration, charter schools, age discrimination, certificated and classified workloads, to racism, white privilege and colonialism. We elected members of committees and celebrated Mandy Manning, Washington's own National Teacher of the Year.

David Hogg, a student from Parkland, stated, "We can't be in a movement by ourselves and for ourselves. What the



Rickie Malone's NBI passed. It stated: "NEA will encourage its locals to advocate for voter registration to take place at all public high schools."

Red for Ed movement has shown us is that when members and non-members, parents, communities and students stand together, we are a formidable force and together we can fight and win."

On July 1st, we joined thousands of Minnesotans on their march opposing immigration policies.

Strategy is everything. A few of us attended the BAT's (Bad Ass Teachers) caucus to ask for and give support for many of the items being presented. Rickie Malone's NBI passed. It stated: "NEA will encourage its locals to advocate for voter registration to take place at all public high schools."

Jan Bowersox encouraged contact with other state delegations to ask about their efforts to include substitutes in their associations. We handed out our newsletter and heard some interesting stories. In all, I will spend months reflecting on all the people I met and important proposals to keep our union strong and in a better direction. It was powerful.

Go to www.nea.org for more stories on the Representative Assembly.

Standardized Testing

By Karin Engstrom

In June, Jeff Treistman, librarian at Denny Middle School, brought for the third time a New Business Item ("NBI") to the SEA Representative Assembly (RA) that read:

Therefore, be it resolved that SEA call for a two year moratorium on all standardized testing at the district, state and federal levels and to open a public forum along with SPS on the best way to assess our students. Teachers will not be compelled to assess their students using any third-party assessment tools.

Be it further resolved that SEA will work with SPS to create waivers. Waivers may be needed during the moratorium for students barred from graduation due to state testing requirements, schools denied Title I funding and other reasons. Ongoing work to delink high school graduation requirements from testing will continue.

The moratorium will be considered a period of action research which will inform strategic planning for the authentic assessment of Seattle students.

All three times the NBI was presented to the SEA Board, the Board recommendation was, "Do Not Pass", but, in June, the RA did pass the NBI by a good margin.

Jeff was a delegate to the NEA-RA and submitted an NBI there:

The NEA will produce an open letter of support for the Seattle Education Association's moratorium on standardized testing.

It passed. Kudos to Jeff who has consistently searched for a way to stop the detrimental affects of testing to the school community. **Now we await what our union will do to carry out this NBI.**

Just on Facebook, the NAACP convention in San Antonio has released an opposition paper on high stakes testing.

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SUBSTITUTES SERVING SEATTLE SCHOOL STAFF & STUDENTS

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SUB^oVOICE

Join Our Campaign: Healthcare for Subs

Subs keep schools running. The school system depends on us. We depend on high quality and reliable healthcare. → Subs report about their healthcare situation:

In the 4 years I have worked as a substitute in this district, I have changed health insurance providers 3 times and spent nearly 6 months without coverage of any kind. This culminated in a long term position at Garfield, where I was working without insurance for the 3 months before qualifying for district coverage. At this same time, a small wound in my foot developed an infection that I was fight-

ing for nearly a month and a half, steadily growing worse, until I was able to hit the 60 consecutive day mark in that classroom. A few days after that I went into the hospital for a week and a half, accumulating thousands of dollars of hospital bills I might have avoided if I had been covered when the infection first developed. I would have been on the hook for thousands more had I

sought healthcare before gaining coverage. Since then, I have bounced back and forth from Cobra to being uninsured, to being on my partner's health insurance. ALL substitutes deserve commensurate benefits to their peers and coworkers, proportional to their workload, no exceptions!

Matt Maley, Sub Association Rep