

9to5 Los Angeles News

August 2010



CALENDAR OF EVENTS



Community Rally outside of Occidental Petroleum July 22, 2010

August 26 Thursday “Women’s Equality Day”	Join 9to5’s Day of Action for Paid Sick Days – Meet up at 11 AM at Downtown’s Pershing Square Metro Stop!
September 6	Labor Day March & Rally 10 AM Join 9to5 to march and table with labor groups in Wilmington
September 8	9to5 Film Series Present: “Iron Jawed Angels” Community Health Councils 6 PM -8:30 PM 3731 Stocker St. 2 nd Floor, L.A
September 19	Los Angeles Chapter Meeting 3 PM – 5 PM 6330 Mecham Way at 64 th ST. Los Angeles, CA 90043
October 5	House Party Fundraiser
October 17	Los Angeles Chapter Meeting 3 PM – 5 PM 6330 Mecham Way at 64 th ST. Los Angeles, CA 90043
November 2	General Election Day – To register before October 8 th deadline, Call 9to5 office: 213-201-7029
November 21	Los Angeles Chapter Meeting 3 PM – 5 PM 6330 Mecham Way at 64 th ST. Los Angeles, CA 90043

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9to5 Camping Retreat Brings it all Together at Morro Bay



9to5 California team

Our 9to5 California retreat in July was not only a blast, but quite productive. It was the first time the Bay Area and Los Angeles chapters joined together for this annual event. The Cerro Alto campground was just a few minutes drive above the coast. Once we arrived at the campground, we were disappointed to learn that it was closed that night for repairs. We were “forced” to stay in a couple of motels Friday night.

But by Saturday morning we all packed up to drive to the campground and set up our tents. We ate our communal food while holding our first meeting around the picnic table. It was great being able to connect with and get to know our L.A. sisters! After the meeting, Cathy, Daislyn, and I headed out for a hike. Thanks to Cathy urging us on we made it to a lovely waterfall and pool with rocks sized just right to rest our weary bones. After hiking back, Joan, Cathy, and I headed for the beach. Aside from the awesome sight of Morro Rock jutting up from the ocean near the coast, we also watched the egrets, sandpipers, and snowy plovers as they searched for and caught their food. Cathy snuck up on both them and us taking pictures and video.

Our campfire that evening consisted of sharing culinary offerings and singing peace and justice songs accompanied by guitar. When the coals had finally died down, we toasted marshmallows for a grand feast of S’mores of graham crackers, Hershey bars, and gooey melted marshmallows.

As I said, we were productive. We all reviewed the By-laws, nominated a slate for the Fall elections, and accepted nominations to join our respective boards. We also coordinated our meeting schedules so Cathy might be able to participate in both San Jose and Los Angeles chapter meetings. We looked at various campaign strategies and then held a hot discussion about the issue of dependent contractors who work for Santa Clara County.

I look forward to getting together with my 9to5 friends at our next retreat and finding out if I can deal with two whole nights of camping!

—Lorraine Zeller

YES! Your Vote Does Count

I was doing outreach a few weeks ago, and I ran into a lady who told me that she doesn’t sign petitions or vote. I was very shocked by this. So I politely asked her why and “Because my vote doesn’t count, so I just don’t” was her response. Many people have this same opinion. They figure “why vote, too many people are doing it already.” But every vote does count and it could be your vote that makes a big difference.

Voting is more than just going to a poll and pressing on a button. It is your voice, your opportunity to actually say what you want to happen in your community, state, and country.

Too many things slide by because people do not vote. Our last presidential campaign is an excellent example. Over 150,000 people that had never voted or even registered to vote finally did. For many, to have a Barak Obama, an African American, run for president was a big deal. Many voted to make sure he was in office and many voted to make sure that he didn’t get in office. Whatever the reason for their votes, they knew that their vote would influence the outcome. In the popular vote, Republican contender John McCain received 58,421,377 votes, or 45.9 percent. Victorious Democratic candidate Barack Obama received 67,066,915 votes, or 52.7 percent. The numbers were very close. But this is just proof of how it all works.

The state of California is holding its general election in November. I encourage everyone to go and vote. If you are not registered, please do so before the October 8 deadline. As everyone knows, California needs some big changes and the only way for us to make that change is to go out and vote and make sure that all of our voices are heard.

---Monica Mitchell





Health Insurance Companies vs. America

Currently in 2010, about 45 million Americans are living without health insurance. That's around 40-60% of the population. Out of those 45 million, 10-15 million can afford insurance but simply choose not to get it. This makes absolutely no sense. There are millions of people who work every day and cannot afford insurance and wish that they had it. Among working adults (ages 18-64) 19.8% of them don't have health insurance, and approximately 9.3% of children under the age 18, do not have health insurance.

Now of those who choose not to get insurance, many believe that they don't need it and that health insurance is just a scam for insurance companies to make money by raising their quotes because they know health insurance is something everyone needs. This statement is partially true. Blue Cross/ Blue Shield Association raised their rates for Virginians 20.5% and 39% for Californians. But even, health insurance is very important to have. Health insurance does more than offer financial benefits to some of life's most serious physical conditions. It also offers peace of mind. While not all people choose to carry health insurance, those who do are better able to find the type of treatment they need when a serious condition strikes. The most common benefits of health insurance are doctor visits, hospitalization, prescription drugs and preventive care. Vision and mental health benefits may also be offered.

Some health insurance companies do take advantage of the need for insurance. According to *Sicko*; a film by Michael Moore, almost fifty million Americans are uninsured and those who are covered are often victims of insurance company fraud and red tape. In this documentary, interviews are conducted with people who thought they had adequate coverage but were denied care. For example a man, the film depicts a man, covered by Blue Shield, who developed cancer.

Doctors ran many tests on him and were not able to find a cure. But then, they found out about bone marrow. With a bone marrow transplant, this guy could live. Doctors were sure of it. The only problem was that this guy needed a match. And eventually they found one in his younger sibling. He was going to live, until the health insurance company denied him the transplant because they said the procedure was "experimental." A couple of weeks later, he died.

How can this be right? How can health insurance companies get away with this?

As Americans, we are known to be the best country and to have a system that helps everyone. But who is it for? Many Americans work hard and pay good money on health insurance to make sure that they and their families are taking care of. This system should not be corrupted for the profit of these companies. It is hard to say which company is better than the next, but as a client of any insurance company you have rights. The right to make sure that you and your family are given the benefits that you were promised by the insurance company.

With all this said, do not get discouraged about health insurance. It is your security for whatever that may happen. Go with the company that you feel will accommodate you and your families.

--Monica Mitchell



STATE BUDGET IN CRISIS

9to5 Rallies for Oil Revenues at Occidental Petroleum



Breonna Guy daughter of Los Angeles 9to5 intern Mich'e Hutchison

"These budget cuts are everywhere. That's what 9to5 has been marching against," stated outraged 7 year old Breonna Guy as she read a school notice that was sent to her mother. School notices have gone out to Inglewood families, notifying that budget cuts to education will require a new 15 minutes cut in the day's program. Children who formerly had 30 minutes to eat breakfast at school before the beginning of class will have only 15 minutes.

By now everyone is aware of all of the proposed budget cuts that the Governor is trying to make. Programs like SSI, In-Home Supportive Services, and Subsidized Childcare are on the chopping block. And one of California's most helpful welfare-to-work program, CalWORKs, is being threatened with elimination. How can this be right? How can people who are trying to survive be able to? It will either be very hard or they won't. Some legislators are finally standing up to the Governor and are telling him "NO" to some of the proposed cuts. But we still don't have a budget for our state, so everything is at a stand still and we have no clue on if, when, or what cuts or eliminations will happen.

To stop these cuts, 9to5 is constantly doing outreach and participating with other organizations and allies to form marches and rallies to let the Governor know that there are ways besides elimination and cuts to help with the state budget. One of our main avenues to obtain revenue is to tax the big oil companies for drilling here or off of our coast. This will raise at least \$1.2 billion to help balance the budget. Why should oil companies have a free ride in California while we still have to pay taxes, even as we go through struggles?

9to5 is only one organization against the state. We cannot do it alone. We need all of your help as well.

We need you to go and be voices for everyone. Go and speak to your legislators. Let them know that there is a time for change and the time is now. We need a budget that works for everyone, and for kids like Breonna too.

--Monica Mitchell

Martha's Corner



Are you aware of how hard it is to survive on a SSI benefit check?

Due to the extreme budget problems that California is experiencing, SSI checks have been cut three times in the last year and expect to be cut once again when the 2010/2011 budget is passed. It is extremely harsh trying to make ends meet. Jobs are scarce.

In California, SSI clients must pay for their rent, expenses and purchase their food with their disability check. Rents are expensive and there is no help or hopes of getting section 8 assistance. The list has been closed indefinitely. Let us not forget that cuts to adult medical necessities like optometry, dental, audiology, and podiatry have already been eliminated. I am saving now for new glasses – it will be months before I can save enough.

Although cost of groceries is extremely high, to add insult to injury, California SSI clients do not qualify for food stamps. Here is a link to a L.A. Times story on the food stamps policy that deprives benefits to SSI recipients of benefits, by asserting that an additional \$10.00 to each individual's benefit will be a fair compensation:

<http://tinyurl.com/39qckh5>

I find it hard to survive on a benefit check that is below the poverty level. I remain optimistic that legislators will see the need to raise revenues for a fair budget.

--Martha Israel

BOARD ELECTION SET FOR SEPTEMBER 19, 2010

The chapter leadership team has opened nominations for the 9to5 Los Angeles Area Board of Directors for 2010-11. Our seven current board members, elected June 2009 are: Marie Reyes, Paula Parke, Ella Townsend, Hilda Evans, Caitlin Frazier, Bethany Ulrich, Avis Williams, Diane Johnson, Hilda Evans, Christopher Touchton, Melissa Jenkins, and Mikala Channel. Current board members may run for re-election. The chapter may elect up to twelve board members.

You may nominate any paid-up chapter member, including yourself. Chapter policy is to elect board members as a team, not by office. The team then elects its own officers. Bylaws are available by calling the office at 408-206-7992. Additional nominations are very welcome. Please contact Cathy Deppe, our staff organizer.

PROPOSED SLATE FOR 2010-2011: (For re-election) Ella Townsend, Avis Williams, Diane Johnson, Christopher Touchton. (New) Velma McClinton, Darhonda Blakely, Mich'e Hutchison, Monica Mitchell, Elena Frias.

The chapter board operates by consensus, and commits itself: (1) to attend 75% of yearly chapter meetings; (2) to work as a team in building our 9to5 chapter membership; (3) to work as a team in planning and raising funds; (4) to select a chair, a treasurer, and any other officers deemed necessary and (5) to support their effort.

Candidates "SPEAK OUT"

"I would like to accept the nomination for re-election to the chapter board, because I am against social injustice and discrimination. I am a dedicated loyal worker who enjoys sharing information and helping others. "

--Avis Williams

With the opportunity to serve the 9to5 L.A. board, I will be able to bring ideas from other boards that I have participated on in the past. 9to5 supports and encourages women to participate in making their lives better.

--Velma McClinton

"I believe in equality, I believe in respect, and I believe that women should not have to choose between their family and work. 9to5 is an organization that stands by my same beliefs. I want to be a part of the 9to5 Los Angeles team because I am hungry. I am hungry to make change. I am hungry to fight for what is right, and with the help of 9to5 we can win 'Paid Sick Days', and 'Equal Pay'."

--Mich'e Hutchison

9to5 L.A. is growing. I want to continue on the board to be part of that important growth. Our members make us strong!

--Diane Johnson

9to5 fights for the rights of women. I want to be part of that fight!

--Ella Townsend

The 9to5 Los Angeles team is proud to have Jorge Ramirez aboard



My name is Jorge Ramirez.

I am originally from El Salvador. I have been in the USA for over 25 years. My experience as an organizer has been as a community organizer and as a union organizer.

I am an organizer by trade, and I like working for progressive issues that benefit working people. Therefore, working for 9to5 make me feel at home. I have always thought that working for justice for working women is one of the most important work that has to be done to have a more just society



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