

# An Open Letter of Concern To Andy Stern About United Healthcare Workers-West

Mr. Andy Stern, President  
Service Employees International Union  
1800 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

May 1, 2008

**Dear Andy:**

We are writing to you as journalists, authors, political activists, and educators who are committed to organized labor because of its important role in social justice struggles in the U.S. Some of us have longstanding ties to SEIU and have done research, writing, or labor education work involving its members, organizers, and local leaders. Those of us who deal with graduate students or undergraduates have encouraged younger people to pursue internships or full-time job opportunities with SEIU and other Change To Win or AFL-CIO unions. A number of us belong to unions ourselves. Many of us have been part of community-labor coalitions or campus-based groups like Scholars, Artists, and Writers for Social Justice (when it was still active) because we support organizing and bargaining by janitors, cafeteria workers, and other service sector employees.

We are writing to express our deep concern about SEIU's threatened trusteeship over its third largest local, United Healthcare Workers (UHW). We believe that there must always be room within organized labor for legitimate and principled dissent, if our movement is to survive and grow.

Putting UHW under trusteeship would send a very troubling message and be viewed, by many, as a sign that internal democracy is not valued or tolerated within SEIU. In our view, this would have negative consequences for the workers directly affected, the SEIU itself, and the labor movement as a whole. We strongly urge you to avoid such a tragedy.

**Sincerely,**

**Michael Albert**, Author, co-founder South End Press and Z Magazine\*

**Richard P. Appelbaum**, Professor of Sociology, University of California-Santa Barbara

**Stanley Aronowitz**, Professor of Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center

**Sara Abraham**, Sociology, University of Toronto

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**Robert Brenner**, Professor of History, UCLA

**Dan Brook**, Sociology, San Jose State University

**Michael Jacoby Brown**, Founder, Jewish Organizing Initiative

**Anita Chan**, Australian National University

**Noam Chomsky**, Professor of Linguistics (Emeritus), MIT

**Levon Chorbajian**, Sociology, U-Mass, Lowell

**Dan Clawson**, Sociology Professor, U-Mass Amherst

**Bruce Cohen**, Associate History Professor, Worcester State College

**Tim Costello**, Labor Researcher and Author

**Mike Davis**, Author and Professor, UC-Irvine

**Ellen David-Friedman**, Founder, Vermont Workers Center and former VEA Staff Member

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