

President's Corner

Happy Black History Month!

African Americans have - and continue to make - absolutely vital contributions to our country and I don't need to tell you about the numerous ways SEIU Local 500 has benefited from the leadership and dedication of our thousands of African-American leaders and activists.

The civil rights movement and the labor movement have been closely intertwined for decades and SEIU has made a long-term commitment to racial justice, to social justice, to economic justice and to education justice. And, of course, SEIU Local 500 was founded, in part, out of a commitment to education justice by the supporting services employees of Montgomery County Public Schools.

I think most people know that the Rev. Dr. King's final days were spent supporting public employees in their struggle for dignity and recognition, but this year, I find myself thinking more and more about the writer and activist, Bayard Rustin.

Even as he faced discrimination for the color of his skin and his sexual orientation, his lifelong commitment was to make economic justice a central focus of the civil rights movement.

He did not believe that justice was possible if workers did not have dignity and a voice.

When I look around at our members, I see caregivers fighting for the right of developmentally disabled people to live with dignity, I see graduate student workers fighting for the right to be fairly paid for their work and I see progressive advocates fighting to receive the same dignity in the workplace that their employers claim to support for others.

In short, I see a movement for justice driven by each and every member of our union.

Thank you for everything that you do.

Respectfully,

Merle Cuttitta
President, SEIU Local 500