

## SEIU's President Sets Sights on New Sectors

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The newly elected head of the powerful Service Employees International Union pledged to focus more on private-sector organizing, including workers in banking and biotechnology, as well as on gubernatorial elections and mending ties with other unions.

Mary Kay Henry, head of the union's health-care division, was elected by the SEIU's board Saturday to succeed Andy Stern, who retired last month after 14 years as president.

In her first moves as president of the 1.8-million-member union, Ms. Henry said SEIU would create a \$4 million "innovation fund" focused on finding new targets and ways of organizing in the private sector, and would set aside another \$4 million for campaigns related to 2010 gubernatorial races in Arizona, California, Connecticut, Illinois, New York, Ohio and Florida, on top of \$10 million proposed earlier.

An SEIU spokeswoman said the union targeted states where it has an active and growing membership and that the SEIU and its locals spend roughly \$250 million a year on organizing. The union said it has organized 22,000 workers since early April, including 5,500 home-care providers in Wisconsin.

"We are renewing our union's incredible commitment to organizing," said Ms. Henry, 52 years old. "We are deeply committed to the low-wage economy and changing that."

Business groups see more organizing campaigns in which the union uses pressure tactics to get employers to agree to unionization without holding secret ballot elections overseen by the National Labor Relations Board.

The SEIU's new fund "sounds like a fancy word for corporate campaigns to pressure employers to recognize unions," said Randel Johnson, vice president of labor policy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "We're certainly concerned about it and workers ought to be too."

In the 2010 governors' races, Ms. Henry said the union would focus on "bad actors." She singled out Gov. Jan Brewer from Arizona, which recently passed a law that requires suspected undocumented immigrants to be asked for proof of citizenship.

The SEIU, which has less than 5,000 members in its Arizona local, many of whom are low-wage immigrant workers, strongly opposes the law. A spokesman for Ms. Brewer couldn't be reached.

The SEIU's ties to governors have been important as it has organized several hundred thousand state-level public-sector workers, many of whose jobs are currently at risk as governors face budget woes.

Ms. Henry put to rest speculation that the SEIU could now return to the AFL-CIO, which it left in 2005. She said the SEIU remains committed to the Change to Win federation it helped form along with other unions like the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. At the same time, she said she would work to strengthen ties with other unions inside the AFL-CIO and help "forge a united labor voice."

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