Statewide Executive Board Meeting
December 8, 2012

APPROVAL OF MINUTES
The Statewide Executive Board (SWEB) voted to approve the minutes from the September 8, 2012 meeting.

COMMITTEE LISTS AND APPOINTMENTS
SWEB voted to approve committee appointments per the committee list dated December 7, 2012. For a complete list of committee members, please visit our website at www.seiu668.org.

STATEWIDE ELECTIONS TASK FORCE
SWEB voted to authorize the officers to appoint a statewide Elections Task Force (not to exceed five SWEB members) to review the current election policies and procedures and make recommendations to the board no later than the June 2013 SWEB meeting. This task force cannot alter or change the current SEIU 668 constitutional language.

OFFICERS’ BENEFITS
SWEB authorized the Budget Finance Committee to review and define the current benefits for SEIU 668 officers and make recommendations to SWEB no later than the June 2013 Statewide Executive Board meeting. Neither the Budget Finance Committee or SWEB may suggest changes to current salaries as set forth in the constitution.

SEASON OF GIVING
1. ONE WARM COAT – SEIU 668 collected and delivered over 50 new and gently worn coats to those in need. The ONE WARM COAT campaign continues until the end of January so please keep collecting coats, hats, gloves and scarves for those much less fortunate than us this holiday season.

2. HURRICANE SANDY RELIEF – SEIU 668 collected and sent over $1,500 to the American Red Cross for Hurricane Sandy relief.

A special THANK YOU to Chapter Chairs, staff and to every member for their help in these campaigns – no lumps of coal for you!

3. NEWTOWN, CONNECTICUT SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRAGEDY - As a former mental health worker of 26 plus years, I have seen many changes in the care and treatment for the mentally ill. Changes in medication have allowed many former patients of mental hospitals to be released and to live a fairly normal life in the community.

Communities (mostly counties) were also tasked with follow up care and with providing outlets and group settings for former patients to help with adjustment and to maintain proper medication levels. When I started at Torrance State Hospital in 1973 there were 27 state hospitals and seven state prisons. Now that has flipped, there are now 7 state hospitals and 27 state prisons.

Each prison has at least one special needs unit to house and care for the mentally ill. So, with advances in treatment, medication and care, what has happened over the last 40 years that allows tragedies such as the recent school shooting to happen?

You need look no further than the state of Pennsylvania for answers. The new Block Grant pilot to counties will decrease by at least 10% the funding for mental health services. Feeling the pinch, programs for the mentally ill have been cut and employees laid off. There are waiting lists to gain admission to a state hospital, both for mentally ill and those in need of care.

The SS Summary is prepared by President Kathy Jellison, Communications Director Leah Wright and Editor Lisa Paul.
ill and developmentally disadvantaged. State hospitals (where I would argue provided a safe, secure environment while also monitoring medication and providing real-life training and job preparation) are a thing of the past. The mentally ill stop taking their medication when they feel good and then quickly regress.

Their social communities have been taken away with the budget cuts and many more are on the street, homeless or sent to prison when they act out. Families are burdened and ill-prepared to take on the care of a mentally ill parent, sibling or child. And then an unspeakable act happens and we scratch our heads and wonder why?

The first thing you hear is that the doer of such heinous behavior was mentally ill. And, more often than not, either has stopped medication and treatment or has a family member trying to care for them. It is time for our commonwealth to stop looking at big business and profits and start looking at the real social issues every state faces. I, for one, believe that guns do not kill people. People kill people with guns. I also believe that people have a right to bear arms, as my husband was an avid hunter.

However, you don’t need an assault rifle to kill a deer or for self-protection and we MUST stop any guns from getting into the hands of those who are not in control of their actions. My heart goes out to those 20 dear babies and six brave teachers who were senselessly murdered by a mentally ill individual.

It is time to take away the stigma attached to mental illness and proactively provide treatment and care for those afflicted with this horrible disease. And, it is time to acknowledge the work that our members do every single day in caring for the mentally ill.

The American Red Cross is collecting money to help the families of the victims. Please consider giving and please keep the families of this senseless tragedy in your thoughts and prayers this holiday season.

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**Five Facts You Can Tell Your Neighbors About Your Pension**

Don’t fall for the blame game. Tell your neighbors:

1. We’ve paid our fair share while the state and school districts have ignored their responsibility and kicked the can down the road for 10 years. Teachers, nurses, librarians, first responders – all public employees pay for pension benefits: most pay 7.5% of salary and some pay 10.3%. Employees always contributed even when the state and school districts failed to make their required contributions.

2. Now, politicians are trying to make public employees pay for mistakes politicians made and, incredibly, the changes they are proposing will actually cost taxpayers more money and will deny public employees the pensions they were promised – and paid for.

3. We’ve stepped up. The 2010 Pension Reform Act reduced public employee pension benefits and raised the retirement age for new employees. Now politicians need to fulfill their promise by paying the employer debt and honoring the commitments they made.

4. Under the Pension Reform Act, 80% of the cost of future pensions is covered by employee contributions and pension fund earnings.

5. Under the Pension Reform Act, taxpayers will save $24.6 billion in pension fund payments in the next 30 years. Harrisburg needs to honor its commitment and let this law work.

For more information please go to www.seiu668.org/pensions.