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

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

Frank Bardacke, Author and Educator

Jennifer Berkshire, Journalist and Editor

Elaine Bernard, Labor and Worklife Program, Harvard Law School

Fred Block, Sociology Department, University of California-Davis

Edna Bonacich, UC-Riverside

Eileen Boris, Women's Studies Professor, University of California, Santa Barbara

Joanna Brenner, Portland State University

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

Michael Denning, Professor of American Studies and Director, Initiative on Labor and Culture, Yale

G.William Domhoff, Sociology Professor, UC Santa Cruz

Jill Esbenshade, San Diego State University

Tess Ewing, U-Mass Boston Labor Center

Rick Fantasia, Sociology Dept., Smith College

Leon Fink, Professor of History, University of Illinois at Chicago

Richard Flacks, UC Santa Barbara

Bill Fletcher, Jr. Co-founder, Center for Labor Renewal & Exec. Editor, Blackcommentator.com

John Bellamy Foster, Professor of Sociology, University of Oregon

Harris Freeman, U-Mass Amherst Labor Center

Yoshie Furuhashi, MRZine

Bill Gallegos, Communities for a Better Environment
William A. Gamson, Professor of Sociology, Boston College and former American Sociological Association president
Zelda Gamson, Senior Associate, New England Resource Center for Higher Education
Dan Georgianna, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Sam Gindin, Packer Chair in Social Justice at York University, former CAW Research Director
George Gonos, Sociology, SUNY Potsdam
Suzanne Gordon, Journalist & Author
Jim Green, Professor of History and Labor Studies, U-Mass Boston
Brian Greenberg, Department of History and Anthropology, Monmouth University
Michael Honey, University of Washington
Thandabantu Iverson, Assistant Professor in Labor Studies, Indiana University
Robin D.G. Kelley, Professor of History, USC
Howard Kimeldorf, University of Michigan
Jennifer Klein, Department of History, Yale
Kitty Krupat, City University of New York
Nelson Lichtenstein, Professor of History, UC Santa Barbara
Stephanie Luce, Associate Professor, Labor Center, U-Mass-Amherst
Biju Mathew, Assistant Professor of Business, Rider University
Dale Melcher, U-Mass Labor Extension
Tom Mertes, UCLA Center for Social Theory
Jack Metzger, Emeritus Professor of Humanities, Roosevelt University
Nancy McLean, Professor of History, Northwestern University
James Monsonis, Professor Emeritus, Simon's Rock College
David Montgomery, Professor Emeritus, Yale
Carolina Bank Munoz, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Brooklyn College-CUNY
Ruth Needleman, Professor of Labor Studies, Indiana University
Manny Ness, Brooklyn College, CUNY
Frances Fox Piven, CUNY Graduate Center
Vijay Prashad, Trinity College
Peter Rachleff, History Dept., Macalester College
Marcus Rediker, History, Univ. of Pittsburgh
Adolph Reed, Professor of Political Science, Univ. of Pennsylvania
Thomas Reifer, Assistant Professor, Sociology and Ethnic Studies, University of San Diego
Christopher Rhomberg, Yale University
Corey Robin, Associate Professor, Political Science, Brooklyn College
Ian Robinson, University of Michigan
Carlos Rosado, Chicago-Kent College of Law
Lucy Rosenblatt, Psychotherapist, Health Workers for People Over Profits
Andrew Ross, New York University
Robert J. S. Ross, Sociology Professor, Clark University
Daisy Rooks, Rutgers University
Jay Schaffner, Author and Moderator, Portside
Michael Schwartz, SUNY Stony Brook
Robert Schwartz, Author and Attorney
Kim Scipes, Professor of Sociology, Purdue
Dennis Serrette, President, United Association for Labor Education
Rae Sovereign, Labor Studies Program, Indiana University-South Bend
Chris Spannos, ZNet and Z Communications
Judith Stepan-Norris, UC-Irvine
Alan Wald, Professor, University of Michigan
Richard Walker, Geography Dept., UC-Berkeley
Immanuel Wallerstein, Professor of Sociology, Yale University
Victor Wallis, Berklee College of Music
Andrea S. Walsh, Lecturer, MIT
Eve Weinbaum, U-Mass Amherst
David Wellman, Sociology Dept., UC-Santa Cruz
Suzi Weissman, St.Mary’s College of CA
Cal Winslow, Fellow, Environmental Politics, UC Berkeley
Steffie Woolhandler & David Himmelstein, Harvard School of Public Health and PNHP
John Womack, History Professor, Harvard
Michael D. Yates, Professor Emeritus, University of Pittsburgh
Dr. Quentin Young, PNHP
Maurice Zeitlin, Dept. of Sociology, UCLA
Howard Zinn, Author, Playwright, and Professor Emeritus, Boston University
Michael Zweig, SUNY at Stony Brook

*Partial list. All institutional connections noted for identification purposes only. (Labor Donated)