



When it comes to League affairs, it is not the nine Directors alone who can always affect change on your behalf. Sometimes, a more meaningful impact is made through member participation. We do the behind-the-scenes heavy lifting and have access to people in key positions on your behalf, asking them to be part of a change that benefits you (as someone who is protecting others)—change that makes our job conducive to serving the public instead of creating obstacles—and convincing them that such change benefits them as well.

Labor unions are about uniting, sharing a common goal, being in the fight together and staying involved. A house divided cannot stand. We need everyone's support and participation. The current Board of Directors has a vision for a stronger League through unification and participation.

The lack of membership participation has developed over time as our union culture. The League has not sufficiently emphasized member participation in my time as a member to the extent it should have. I think we can do this by asking for something reasonable without turning your life upside down—like joining us in a rally just once every two years. Think of all other labor unions—from longshoremen to teachers, hotel workers and nurses—and their level of participation in union affairs. We see them marching, demonstrating, handing out flyers and educating the public sometimes in the thousands and on their own time. They have families, do not necessarily live within the city limits and volunteer their time in their communities as we do. No union is expected to succeed without the participation of its membership.

I expect our members to be part of the change that is long overdue in our culture. Don't expect the public to campaign on our behalf if we won't even pull together and advocate for ourselves.

Something to think about: Are you personally more eager to lend your support or keep in your thoughts a cause or a group that has a mere five people standing on a street corner holding signs, or are you more likely to do it for a group that shows up in numbers and is well organized? More likely you'd opt for the more visible and organized group. This is, outside of our work performance and service delivery, the way our collective labor organization is noted, conversely, "not noted" in case of a no-show. It is about the perception that creates the reality.

I am asking all of us to improve our visibility and to participate in this change by committing to two simple things. First and foremost: Be good to each other and take care of each other.

Make sure your brother and sister officers know they are appreciated and that you've got their backs. That should be on top of your list, always. The second thing is to be involved in your League.

If your League (emphasis on YOUR) has a call for action, I would highly encourage you to participate. It's a great opportunity to be part of changing the course of your own professional life. If your League can count on you dedicating a few well-spent hours of your time in a two-year period, we will be looking at a monumental change in how the LAPPL is perceived as a union.

I am asking each of our members to commit three hours of your time to any League cause in every two-year period. I realize we all have busy lives with off-duty commitments, second jobs and families, but I am convinced that three hours of your time will be a great investment toward your own financial future. Off-duty teachers gather almost on a weekly basis at Third Street and Bixel at the Board of Education headquarters to make their voices heard with their employer. Hotel workers show up by the thousands when called upon, as do longshoremen and nurses. We are not immune from the scrutiny of our elected officials as they note our participation level. When we send out over 9,000 emails (please update your email addresses with us or set up an email address just for League updates, as it is our way of communicating important information to our members), most of the time and more than once, only four of our members show up. Whether it's to thank a politician who did us a solid by personally removing an offensive painting depicting police officers as pigs from the Capitol (that caused a dayslong firestorm on social media), or a pro law enforcement rally to which only one of our members showed up, and at another location, about 15—it projects apathy and does not inspire others to join our collective cause (our and their safety and respect for our profession). Most people, as I have noted, do back us. It is unfortunately the silent majority that also needs to be encouraged to show their support for us.

It is the handful dedicated few who arise to the occasion and show up at League-encouraged or League-involved events. Their participation is greatly appreciated. We need to do better, as the dedicated few cannot sufficiently represent by themselves. This is YOUR League. Our mission is to fight for wages, benefits, working conditions and legal rights, but we can only get there with your help. I would think that it is perfectly reasonable to volunteer three hours of your time in a two-year period (approximately 730 days) to something that directly benefits your family's livelihood. What are your pay, benefits, working conditions and legal rights worth to you? Are they worth the time of your participation in an event? This may be a request to meet us at the City Hall, the Police Commission, at a pro-police rally or meeting with an elected official. The League can facilitate parking, parking fee reimbursement, food or even transportation to the event. All we are asking for is your time, three hours every 730 days.

We are as strong as the people who are behind us. When you put out a backup request over the radio and you start hearing the police sirens in the distance, it gives you hope and confidence and conviction that your brothers and sisters in blue have your back. When the League puts out a backup request, please start rolling to let us know you have our backs.

Let's get involved!

As always, take care and stay safe! If you have any questions, feel to email me at TJTarjamo@lappl.org or contact me at (213) 798-2286.