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Cook County Recorder of Deeds Workers to Lose Jobs in Merger

SEIU Local 73, Worker's Union, Not Included in Merger Discussion

Chicago - At this week's Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Cook County Board meeting, Cook County Recorder of Deeds workers found out that they would be losing their jobs. About 400 workers from both the Cook County Clerk's Office and the Cook County Recorder of Deeds, represented by SEIU Local 73, will be impacted by this merger.

The merger between the Cook County Clerk's Office and the Cook County Recorder of Deeds has been in the works for months. The plan for consolidation is in December of 2020. At the virtual meeting this week, Legal Counsel Sisavanh Baker (speaking on behalf of Cook County Clerk Karen Yarbrough) assured Cook County Commissioners that the Clerk's Office had been in touch with SEIU Local 73 about the plan. The assertion was also repeated by the HR Deputy present at the meeting.

SEIU Local 73 was not involved in the planning process of the merger and found out about the loss of jobs during the Legislation and Intergovernmental Relations Committee of the Cook County Board meeting this week. All positions from the Cook County Recorder of Deeds will be eliminated which impacts about 100 workers and their families. Many positions will be added to the Cook County Clerk's Office, but current workers employed by the Cook County Recorder of Deeds are not guaranteed their jobs once the merger takes place.

"At no time did we have the information that the merger would result in workers losing their jobs. When voters voted it was for a merger of the two offices, not a complete dissolve of one office where workers would lose their jobs," said Dian Palmer, SEIU Local 73 President. "The Cook County Clerk's Office and the Cook County Recorder of Deeds were not transparent in their process. It's not right and shows a lack of respect for the years of public service these workers have given to Cook County. We will do everything necessary to secure the jobs of the Recorder of Deeds workers."

The Cook County Clerk's Office agreed to a meeting with SEIU Local 73 that will take place next week. SEIU Local 73 will be proposing that the current Cook County Recorder of Deeds employees be assured job security when the merger is finalized.

"I've been working at the Cook County Recorder of Deeds for 23 years. With this merger, my position will be eliminated. It's not fair that after all these years of service, Cook County is not recognizing the contribution of my public service," said Tondalaya Thomas, Cook County Recorder of Deeds worker and SEIU Local 73 member leader. "It's a lack of respect for workers and my union that we had to find out at the Board meeting about the impact this merger will have on my life, my family, and the life of my co-workers. We should be able to keep our jobs and just transfer our positions to the City Clerk's Office. It's the right thing to do."

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SEIU Local 73 represents more than 29,000 workers, primarily in public service and publicly funded positions in school districts, municipalities, social service agencies, and many other job classifications in Illinois and Indiana. We are dedicated to improving the lives of workers and their families.