

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** Monday, October 19

**CONTACT:** Adrian Rojas, arojas@seiu73.org, (773) 344-4564

# A Message to Cook County Board: No More Politics Over People

## SEIU Local 73, Labor Leaders Demand Workers Get Justice, Not Layoffs

CHICAGO, IL. -- Today, October 19, Cook County workers and labor leaders called for an end to austerity. Leaders from SEIU Local 73, SEIU Local 1, SEIU HCII, the Chicago Federation of Labor, Teamsters 743, National Nurses United (NNU), and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) participated in today's press conference in light of efforts to merge the Recorder's Office with the Clerk's Office, which eliminates 78 positions.

"The Cook County Clerk released a plan to call for the Recorder's Office employees, after working through the worst of the COVID pandemic, to lose their job on December 4, [2020], just before the holidays, at a time where emotions are high and costs are higher," said SEIU Local 73 President Dian Palmer.

"This merger won't allow those who rely on our services to easily access their files. After this planned merger, who knows when they'll ever have access to these critical files," said Schaunda Hall, Microfilm Operator at the Recorder of Deeds.

"For the citizens who rely on the office for critical home ownership, small business operations, and more that have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, this ordinance will allow seamless continuity of the Recorder's Office services. In addition, it helps maintain employees' collective bargaining rights," said Dennis Kosuth, NNU Member and Registered Nurse for Cook County Health.

Between a global pandemic and a national political crisis, Cook County's most vulnerable communities are rightfully scared. The Board simply cannot afford to throw vital Cook County services, which includes critical home and small business ownership operations, into disarray. Between health services and the Recorder of Deeds, workers who have decades of experience are set to be let go as the County pursues an austerity budget, and the people who rely on their services will be left hanging.

When the pandemic struck, public service workers were asked to stay on the job. They were called essential and heroes by the Cook County Board, but are now being told their services are no longer needed. This is an affront to their commitment to the county's communities and shows that the Board does not care about the ramifications of such a decision.

SEIU Local 73 and other labor leaders have asked Cook County Commissioners to say YES to the Employee Continuation Substitute Ordinance, which provides seamless continuity of Recorder's Office services, maintains employees collective bargaining rights, offers right to transfer for current Recorder's Office frontline personnel into newly created Clerk's Office positions, and ensures Recorder's Office personnel will maintain seniority rights.

SEIU Local 73 members and fellow labor leaders will not stand for this injustice. Together they are demanding that the Cook County Board recognizes and respects the dedication these workers have demonstrated through a pandemic.

## Watch Today's Press Conference

###

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 and communities.