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‘Respect Us, Protect Us, Pay Us’ Demand SEIU Local 73 Cook County Members During One-Day Strike at Hospitals, Jail & Clerk’s Offices

Chicago, IL — SEIU Local 73 Cook County members began a one-day strike at 6am CT on Tues., Dec. 22, with picket lines at Stroger Hospital, Provident Hospital, Cermak, and the Daley Center. More than

1,600 members are on strike from Cook County Health, Sheriff’s Office, and Clerk’s Office.

A [press conference](#) was held at Stroger Hospital this morning and [SEIU Local 73’s Facebook](#) will be updated throughout the day with videos, photos, and stories from strikers.

“We come to work every day and put our lives on the line,” said Juanita Ervin, Health Advocate at Stroger Hospital. “We are being treated like we are not human. The County has walked out on bargaining and refused to bargain with many of our units. Enough is enough!”

SEIU Local 73 members’ topline immediate demands are for the county to protect all workers by:

- Providing pandemic pay for all essential frontline workers.
- Working remotely where possible and safe social distancing with PPEs where it isn’t possible.
- Paying an additional \$5/hour for all workers in COVID Units or taking care of COVID patients from Dec. 1 to Dec. 30, to be renegotiated post Dec. 30.
- Providing Contact Tracer positions for the 48 Recorder of Deeds Office workers eliminated by the ROD-Clerk merger.
- Extending seniority rights across the County to ensure what happened to Recorder of Deeds Office workers doesn’t happen again and rewarding longevity.
- Ensuring every worker is paid in the right pay grade and on the right step.

“President Lincoln said all men are created equal, but crooked Cook County has shown that everyone working here is not equal,” said Tameka Smith, Administrative Assistant at Cook County Sheriff. “30% of the Records Department has contracted COVID, but we still reported to work to make sure operations continue. We truly deserve hazard pay.”

“President Preckwinkle, the time is now to step up,” said Jeffrey Howard, Executive Vice President of SEIU Local 73. “These workers have been on the line since the pandemic started. You found money to replace us. All we ask is you find the money to take care of us.”

SEIU Local 73 and Cook County workers filed notice of intent to strike on Dec. 7, and have continued to offer bargaining sessions with the County to reach a fair contract. Cook County has spent over \$1 million in public funds since Nov. 30 to pay for strikebreakers from high-risk COVID states endangering workers’ and patients’ lives.

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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.