



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Eric Bailey, 860-997-2717, ebailey@seiu73.org

SEIU Local 73 Cook County Members to Strike, Demand County 'Respect Us, Protect Us, Pay Us'

Chicago, IL - SEIU Local 73 President Dian Palmer and Cook County workers announced they will be holding a one-day strike on Tuesday, December 22. The following units will be participating in the strike: Cook County Health Technicians and Service & Maintenance workers; and Sheriff's Office employees.

For nearly three months, SEIU Local 73 has attempted to bargain with Cook County. During which, the County has refused to set bargaining dates, cancelled bargaining dates, and walked out on negotiations.

"Our members have put their lives on the line to keep Cook County functioning," said Dian Palmer. "The complete lack of respect by Toni Preckwinkle and the managers under her supervision is shocking. We have respiratory therapists and healthcare workers working to save lives. We have election workers who made sure the presidential election ran smoothly. We have custodians sanitizing courthouses and public offices to keep people safe. We have office workers at the County jail, a hotspot for COVID, coming in every day. The least Preckwinkle could do is respect, protect, and pay these essential workers by bargaining in good faith and providing pandemic pay to all essential workers."

The County has refused to provide pandemic pay for all essential frontline workers who have kept things functioning throughout the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The County chose to spend millions in public funds to [fly in strikebreakers](#) from high-risk COVID states like Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, Texas, South Carolina, and New York, putting workers' and patients' lives at risk. Toni Preckwinkle has yet to answer whether CARES Act funds were used to hire strikebreakers.

SEIU Local 73 members' topline immediate demands that protects all workers are:

- Pandemic pay for all essential frontline workers
- Working remotely where possible and safe social distancing with PPEs where it isn't possible
- 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.
- Provide Contact Tracer positions for the 48 Recorder of Deeds Office workers eliminated by Karen Yarbrough
- Extending seniority rights across the County to ensure what happened to ROD workers doesn't happen again
- Ensuring every worker is paid in the right pay grade and on the right step
- Rewarding longevity

SEIU Local 73 has repeatedly offered all dates, including nights and weekends, to continue bargaining throughout negotiations.

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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.