



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UIC Workers Send Notice to Management Over Failure to Implement Contract

Chicago, IL – On September 14, 2020, the workers at the University of Illinois-Chicago began a 10-day unfair labor practices strike demanding UIC “respect us, protect us, and pay us” after more than a year’s worth of contract negotiations had failed. The 10-day strike resulted in tentative agreements that provide workers with pay increases, including a \$15 minimum wage in Chicago for those on the lowest pay scale, better health and safety protocols for COVID-19, increased staffing, and protections against outsourcing good union jobs.

UIC has failed to honor the contract and implement the retro pay for all workers. The lowest paid service workers at UIC have yet to see the retroactive pay promised in the contract.

“We went on strike last year to fight for protection for our co-workers throughout the pandemic,” said Lavitta Steward, clerical worker and Local 73 vice president. “Not only are members still waiting on retro pay that they were promised six months ago, but upon implementation of the contract UIC also unilaterally changed pay scales for a number of job titles without negotiating them with the union.”

The union has filed Unfair Labor Practices charges against UIC for failing to bargain the unilateral changes during the contract implementation.

“We are here today to send a clear message to UIC. Implement our contract correctly by the one-year anniversary of our strike or be reminded of what SEIU Local 73 members at UIC can do,” said Steward.

"I have worked as cook in the kitchen at UIC hospital for many years," said Byron Miller. "Our department is mostly black and Hispanic. We fought back against the outsourcing but ultimately the kitchen was sold and we were told our positions would be eliminated. We were told we had to make a choice: stay with Aramark and lose our state benefits, or keep our pension and take a pay cut back to \$15. They bully you. They take away your options. That itself is racism – it's share cropper shit."

"Our side has to unite. From top to bottom. When they try to outsource, we fight back. When they make us choose between keeping our pay, or keeping our pension, we fight back. When they take too long to pay us the money owed in our contract, we fight back. And with every battle we take on, we get stronger and stronger," said Miller.

SEIU Local 73 represents nearly 4,000 workers in Clerical, Civil Service Professionals, Service & Maintenance, and Technical Units. These workers from across UIC campuses provide a wide variety of services to students and patients ranging from building services workers who clean bathrooms to occupational therapists to people who work with children with special needs to hospital support staff.

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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.