



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Cook County Workers Turnout in Force at Preckwinkle's Office Building, Fundraiser**

**Chicago, IL** – Cook County workers who have been on strike for five days, and working without a contract since Nov. 30, 2020, turned out in force yesterday to occupy County President Toni Preckwinkle's office building on Clark St. yesterday.

Chants of "One Day Longer! One Day Stronger!" and "We will not back down!" echoed through the halls as more than 500 workers, community members, clergy, and public officials occupied the building. will continue striking today and we will congregate at a Countywide Rally downtown in front of President Toni Preckwinkle's offices from Noon-2pm!

"Monday night County negotiators kept us bargaining until two in the morning and said this was their best, final offer. I can tell you it wasn't their best and it damn sure wasn't their final," said Dian Palmer, President of Local 73.

Local 73 learned yesterday that County negotiators agreed to increases on steps for the other Cook County unions and never made the same offer to our members.

"This means taking thousands of dollars out of our pockets and paychecks and food out of our families' mouths! Toni Preckwinkle is trying to make SEIU Local 73 members second-class citizens!" said Palmer.

The rally then took to Daley Plaza where more community leaders came to show their support for the more than 2,000 workers on strike.

"The 30,000 members of the Chicago Teachers Union have 73's back," said CTU Vice President Stacy Davis Gates. "I understand the disrespect of a boss that will offer everybody else something. If you need six days, we got your back. If you need seven days, we got your back. If it takes longer, we will come out and help you shut it all down with red and purple."

"It's an honor to be here supporting you, especially all of the black and brown women, demanding fair working conditions," said Alderwoman Rossana Rodriguez, 33rd Ward.

“It’s unconscionable that we are still in a pandemic and we have to beg for the most basic things. We are going to be with you every step of this fight and we are going to win!”

“A few moments ago, we were in the people’s building. And now we are on the people’s plaza, starting the people’s revolution,” said Rev. CJ Hawkins, Executive Director of ARISE Chicago. “You would think that as we emerge from a pandemic that workers would be asking for the sun, moon, and the stars. But they’re not. They’re asking for simple dignity on the job.”

“I am the child of a single mother. I know what it’s like to see people struggle. Who cannot afford health insurance even though they work,” said State Senator Mike Simmons (D-7). “It is a disgrace that we live in a society that would expect people that are underpaid and underappreciated to come to work doing dangerous jobs that we all depend on.”

Each day of this strike is one day too long. You shouldn’t have to strike for pandemic pay, yet you are here. You shouldn’t have to strike for the pay that you deserve, yet you are here,” said Dr. Robert C. Jones, Jr., Pastor, Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church. “We are demanding that Cook County President Toni Preckwinkle come to the table and settle this contract. It’s morally wrong and unacceptable to treat the frontline workers who keep our hospitals, county offices, and corrections facilities running, and treating them like they’re disposable, by denying them dignity, safety, and pandemic pay.”

At 5:30pm, striking workers regrouped outside of Capri Pizza in Hyde Park, where Preckwinkle was holding a \$150 a plate fundraiser. Her security ushered her quickly inside the building while workers demanded she give them a fair contract. Several public officials were seen driving away, refusing to cross the picket line. Contributors who went inside were politely asked to encourage Preckwinkle to settle the contract and consider donating to the workers Strike Hardship Fund instead. Some attendees actually changed their mind about attendee after speaking with workers about the ongoing strike and working without a contract since last November.

The countywide strike continues on its sixth day with County negotiators refusing to return to the bargaining table for the second day in a row.

Since yesterday, Tom Balanoff, President of SEIU Local 1, Greg Kelley, President of SEIU HCII, and Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73, have attempted to hold a direct meeting with Toni Preckwinkle to encourage her to send her bargaining team back to the table, but Preckwinkle has not acknowledged the request.

Cook County workers will be striking on Wednesday, June 30 at the following locations:

**6:00 am - 10:00 am**

*Northside Construction Site*

Lake Cook Rd & McHenry Rd, Buffalo Grove

*Southside Construction Site*  
95th St. and Roberts Rd., Hickory Hills

**8:00 am - 4:00 pm**  
Stroger Hospital  
Provident Hospital  
County Jail  
118 N. Clark St.

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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.*