



For Immediate Release

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Thousands of Cook County Workers, Nurses Ready to Strike

Chicago, IL – Cook County workers and nurses have overwhelmingly voted to go on strike after more than nine months of contract negotiations. Workers will be striking on or after, Thursday, June 24, at Stroger and Provident Hospitals, 69 W. Washington, Cook County Jail, and County highway maintenance facilities.

"I voted to strike because it is time for change," said Eugenia Harris, Ward Clerk, Stroger Hospital. "We are fighting for a contract that provides safe and adequate staffing. A contract that provides equal pay for equal work. A contract that will make Cook County an employer of choice."

"Nurses are being pushed to a breaking point" said Consuelo Vargas, an emergency room RN at Stroger Hospital. "We do not want to strike, we want to be at the bedside, but it is time for Cook County to create a plan to hire nurses to care for our community."

"For years I've worked in politics, particularly with Toni Preckwinkle, who said she would work with the unions to ensure they had contracts with fair wages. She's turned her back on us." said James Phipps, Support Staff, County Clerk's Office.

"The continued disrespect shown by the County has resulted in our members overwhelmingly voting to strike for the second time in six months," said Dian Palmer, President of SEIU Local 73 which represents nearly 2,500 workers in Cook County. "It is time for Cook County to take these negotiations seriously. Our union isn't striking because we want to, we will be striking because we have to. And the reality is, the County has the power to avoid a strike, by treating our members with dignity and respect."

"I stand in complete support and solidarity with the unions to bring about economic security for their members," said County Commissioner Brandon Johnson. "We must put dollars to the areas of need. We have to make sure the people who do the work are in the best possible positions to do their jobs."

"The Chicago labor movement stands in solidarity with our brothers and sisters at Local 73 and NNU," said Chicago Federation of Labor Secretary Treasurer Don Villar. "These workers showed up and sacrificed to keep the County running during the pandemic. They should be rewarded and recognized for their work. It's time for a contract that respects them."

"We stand in proud solidarity with Local 73 and NNU," said Greg Kelley, President of SEIU Healthcare Illinois. "Our members understand that the decision to strike is not an easy one, but often a necessary one. These unions fought for us when we were on strike and we will fight for them."

On behalf of the members of SEIU Local 1, we stand in solidarity with the workers of Cook County," said Genie Kastrup, Executive Vice President of SEIU Local 1. "We've got your back and we will do whatever it takes to make sure you get the contract you deserve!"

"As a faith leader in Cook County, I find it unfortunate that the County calls these workers heroes while treating them like zeroes," said Dr. Robert C. Jones, Jr., Pastor, Mt. Carmel Missionary Baptist Church. "I wholeheartedly support their strike for a fair contract and call on Cook County to do the right thing."

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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.

National Nurses United is the largest union of Registered Nurses in the United States. In Illinois, NNU represents more than 6,000 RNs in federal sector, public sector, and private sector hospitals, clinics, health departments, and correctional facilities.