



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Adrian Rojas / arojas@seiu73.org, (773) 344-4564

SEIU Local 73 Members Vote to Authorize Strike at UIUC

Champaign-Urbana - Service workers at the University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign, backed by their union SEIU Local 73, voted overwhelmingly to approve a strike authorization. The vote, which was the largest turnout in the unit's history, lasted from May 2 to May 14 and resulted in 91% approval. This authorizes the bargaining committee to call a strike vote and subsequently strike if membership votes in the affirmative.

"This is big. The votes show a vast majority of membership are ready to take action to fight for workplace justice," says Mike Lindley, a Building Service Worker.

Service workers at UIUC, who clean rooms, cook food, sanitize restrooms, and more, have been frustrated with the university's lack of initiative during negotiations. The university has postponed or canceled sessions, key members of management do not show up, and, thus far, the university has failed to provide any economic proposals despite the contract expiring in a little over three months.

"Workers on this campus are sick and tired of the disrespect. We are human beings. UIUC wants to use us up, break us, and throw us away. This vote was workers standing up," says Dena Gary, union chapter president and Food Service Worker.

Steve Woodcock, Building Service Worker, agrees: "U of I is not listening, hasn't been listening, doesn't want to hear from its workforce. They don't want to hear about conditions on campus, for students or workers. But they will have to listen now."

The SEIU Local 73 bargaining team is set to meet with UIUC management on Tuesday, May 17.

In addition to the strike authorization, the union continues its lawsuit against the university in response to the latter forbidding SEIU Local 73 members from speaking at recent Board of Trustees meetings, which allows for public testimony.

SEIU Local 73 has also requested a federal mediator for upcoming negotiations, but the university has refused to approve it. The union is set to request intervention by Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board.

###

SEIU Local 73 represents more than 31,000 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.