



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Adrian Rojas, (773) 344-4564

SEIU Local 73 Sues University of Illinois Board of Trustees for Violating Members' Constitutional Rights

Urbana-Champaign - SEIU Local 73 has filed a lawsuit with the Illinois Central District Court against the University of Illinois Board of Trustees for violating the constitutional rights of members at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Three UIUC employees submitted requests to speak during a Board meeting, which were denied by Board Secretary Greg Knott in violation of their First and Fourteenth Amendment rights and the Open Meetings Act.

UIUC Building and Food Service workers are currently in contract negotiations with the University. Chapter President Dena Gary, union steward and trustee Michael Lindley, and bargaining committee member Kelsey Hayes wanted to address the Board about unfair bargaining practices and workplace issues. Secretary Knott informed members via email that their request was denied because they were speaking to issues under negotiation as part of the University's collective bargaining process.

"When I requested to speak to the Board, I specifically stated I wanted to speak on the state of labor relations. It's clear the University is not interested in even hearing about the impact their decisions have on essential workers, let alone actually doing something about it," said Mike Lindley.

This denial comes after months of disrespect and delays in the bargaining process. UIUC responded to Local 73's request to bargain outside of the mandatory 30-day period, breaking a previous contractual agreement. Though UIUC has come to the bargaining table, members feel as though they haven't put forth any meaningful economic proposals or counter-proposals. Local 73 has submitted three separate requests for a federal mediator, which UIUC has denied.

UIUC has also refused to issue full back pay for building service workers who have been underpaid for months due to a payroll error. The University corrected the payroll error and issued back pay for most workers in November, however some workers are still missing the full amount owed. Local 73 issued a grievance against the University in February 2022.

#

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.