



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

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NEW HAVEN JANITORS DEMAND JUSTICE

***- Elected Officials, Community and Religious Leaders Sign “Bill of Rights”-
- Hundreds Rally on the New Haven Green-***

New Haven, CT – Janitors organizing for improved wages and benefits were joined by hundreds of supporters today at a massive rally on the New Haven Green. The workers, who clean more than 45 buildings, or approximately 10 million square feet of commercial office space, in New Haven County, have joined together in a campaign for better wages, benefits such as health insurance, sick days and paid holidays, and respect on the job.

“All workers deserve decent wages to support their families, and to be treated with dignity and respect,” said Mayor DeStefano. “I support Local 32BJ’s campaign to raise the quality of life for working people because it will strengthen our communities and our City.”

Most New Haven area janitors earn only minimum wage, \$7.40 per hour, or slightly more, and have no health insurance. Further, most of the janitorial jobs are part time, forcing cleaners to work two or three jobs. In contrast, Hartford area cleaners will earn \$11.50 per hour in 2007 and full time workers receive employer-paid health care. The workforce is made up largely of Latino immigrants who live in and around the City.

More than 140 elected officials, religious, community and labor leaders have signed onto a “Building Service Workers’ Bill of Rights,” pledging to support janitors in New Haven as well as the fight to raise wage and benefit standards for all workers.

“This fight is about basic fairness. Working men and women are seeking simple justice and speaking truth to power,” said Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. “Their message cannot be denied or dismissed and the battle cannot be abandoned. I’m proud to support this campaign and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with these workers as I have done in other cities.”

The New Haven rally comes two days before National “Justice for Janitors” Day, which was established after police beat janitors in Los Angeles during a peaceful demonstration against a cleaning contractor on June 15, 1990. The contractor later recognized the L.A. janitors in a union. To commemorate that event, SEIU janitors and supporters take action every June 15. The Justice for Janitors campaign, now in its 21st year, is about uniting hard-working janitors for fair working conditions, dignity and respect.

“Just like janitors across the nation, cleaners in New Haven are standing up together for the American Dream,” said Héctor Figueroa, Local 32BJ Secretary-Treasurer. “These workers deserve to be treated fairly and on par with janitors throughout the state.”

With more than 85,000 members in six states and Washington, D.C. – including 4,500 in Connecticut – Local 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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