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SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CLEANERS REJECT CONTRACT PROPOSAL OFFERING TOKEN PAY RAISE

- 1,500 Montgomery County and 700 Baltimore cleaners are ready to strike -

Washington, DC – Local 32BJ rejected the Commercial Building Cleaning Contractors Association’s contract proposals that would provide Montgomery County and Baltimore cleaners an inadequate pay raise. The two sides met yesterday for the fourth time.

“Employers claim that landlords, who have made billions off the City’s real estate market, want to keep cleaners working part-time which would keep them ineligible for health care and other benefits,” said Jaime Contreras, Local 32BJ Capital Area Director. “These employers are playing Scrooge with men and women who deserve a raise that helps them better support their families. Without health benefits, workers and their families are constantly at risk of costly illness.”

Negotiations for a new union contract covering 1,500 cleaners in Montgomery County, Maryland, 700 Baltimore cleaners and 4,500 commercial cleaners in Washington, D.C. began on November 15 between Local 32BJ and cleaning contractors who serve the area’s real estate industry. Local 32BJ presented its contract proposals to leaders representing major commercial cleaning companies in the region, including Red Coats, Inc., American Building Maintenance (ABM) and Unico.

Local 32BJ members are preparing to go on strike, if they decide it becomes necessary. A strike, if one occurs, could affect over 43 buildings in Montgomery County, including the Chevy Chase Bank Building, the Discovery Building, Rock Spring Office Park and over 35 Baltimore buildings, including the Candler Building, Legg Mason Building and the Bank of America Building.

Local 32BJ commercial cleaners currently earn wages ranging from \$7.50 in Baltimore and Montgomery County to \$10.55 in Washington, D.C. In addition to securing a fair wage increase, other goals for the contract negotiations include increasing employer-paid benefits.

“Getting serious about reducing shamefully high poverty rate in the Capitol region means we must raise wages for working people,” said Local 32BJ President Mike Fishman. “Securing a fair wage and benefit contract for hard-working office cleaners will enable thousands of men and women to better support their families and strengthen much needed anti-poverty efforts.”

“No one can make a living and provide for their families on \$9 to \$10 an hour in an area as expensive as Washington and Maryland,” said Jose Gonzalez, a father of five and Washington area cleaner who earns \$9.00 per hour working for ABM. “We struggle to cover basic expenses not to mention health care needs.”

More than 50,000 commercial cleaners from Hartford, CT to Washington, D.C. are united in a campaign to secure new contracts that raise wage and benefit standards. Most contracts, including Baltimore and Montgomery County, are set to expire on December 31, 2007. Failure to reach a new contract could lead to a strike of up to 2,200 building service workers in Montgomery County and Baltimore.

With more than 85,000 members in six states, including 9,000 in the Washington D.C.-Maryland area, Local 32BJ is the largest property service workers union in the country.