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SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OFFICE CLEANERS TAKE THEIR FIGHT TO WALL STREET
- NYC Comptroller Thompson Supports Union Effort to Make Work Pay -

New York, NY – With their contract set to expire in eleven days, New York City commercial office cleaners took their contract fight to Wall Street. At a rally in the financial district this afternoon, New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. called for a fair contract settlement to avoid a strike. Negotiations have been underway since October 24, 2007, when Local 32BJ presented its proposals for a new contract covering 26,000 commercial workers to the Realty Advisory Board (RAB), an association of commercial building owners, managers and cleaning contractors.

“Working New Yorkers, such as our City’s office cleaners, are getting squeezed more and more by the rising cost of living,” said Comptroller Thompson. “The hard working men and women of Local 32BJ deserve a fair wage raise so that they can support their families.”

Citing the real estate industry’s \$20 billion in annual revenue and reports that Wall Street firms are set to distribute record bonuses totaling \$38 billion, office cleaners reiterated their call for a wage increase to get ahead of the cost of living.

“In a city as rich as ours, there’s no excuse for neglecting the very people who keep it clean, keep it safe and keep it moving,” said Michael Fishman, Local 32BJ President. “With the real estate industry prospering, it’s time to help the people who keep New York City buildings clean get ahead.”

“I used to work at the World Trade Center and I’ve watched downtown not only recover, but also flourish,” said Francis Martinez, who works at the World Financial Center. “But those of us who helped make it happen aren’t reaping the benefits, we are struggling to get by.”

The two sides met on December 17th and will return to the bargaining table on December 27th. Failure to reach a new contract by December 31, 2007, when the current contract expires, could lead to a strike of some 26,000 commercial property service workers at more than 2,000 buildings, including the World Financial Center, the Met Life building and the Empire State Building.

New York City is one of six markets in the northeast where Local 32BJ is negotiating new contracts for nearly 50,000 commercial members this fall.

With more than 85,000 members in six states, including 60,000 in New York City, Local 32BJ is the largest property service union in the country.

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