



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Julie Karant: 646-584-9001

Kate Ferranti: 212-388-3469

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, January 8, 2008

NEW CITY COUNCIL BILL RAISES WAGES FOR THOUSANDS OF SECURITY OFFICERS

Washington, DC – Private Security officers and Local 32BJ members praised City Council Members today for passing into law the Enhanced Professional Security Amendment Act of 2007. The bill would set the wage and benefit level for security officers protecting private commercial office buildings at \$11.51/hour plus \$3.16 for benefits. Over five years, the bill will provide more than \$55 million in wages and benefits to help security officers better support local business and communities.

“I commend City Council members for working with us to make livable wages a high priority,” said Jaime Contreras, Local 32BJ Capital Area Director. “The real estate industry has been producing billions while the brave men and women who protect City buildings have been paid as little as \$10 per hour.”

The bill was introduced in May by Public Safety and Judiciary Committee Chair, Council Member Phil Mendelson and Council Member Kwame Brown and co-introduced by Council Members Marion Barry, Tommy Wells, Jim Graham and Harry Thomas. Council Member Mary Cheh is a co-sponsor and Council Members Muriel Bowser and Yvette Alexander have also voiced support for the bill.

“By requiring fair wages, we are taking an important step to address our City’s staggering poverty rate,” said the bill’s sponsor, Council Member Phil Mendelson.

“District residents need more jobs available that provide their families with a better quality of life,” said At-Large Council Member Kwame R. Brown who co-introduced the bill. “Not only does this legislation help provide District residents with the opportunity for a living wage, it is a win-win collaboration for security officers who keep us safe and for businesses that depend on a stable, quality workforce.”

“To keep tenants in my building secure, I have to put my own safety on the line,” said Raquel Mack, a pregnant single mother and security officer who protects a downtown office building. “This raise will help me pay more bills and make a better life for my son.”

Local 32BJ recently gained the first-ever DC-area commitment from top private commercial security providers to negotiate a contract to improve the training, working conditions, pay and health care for 2,000 officers in Washington. Together, these contractors secure more than 75% of Washington’s commercial office space, including the National Press Building, Watergate Office Buildings, the National Geographic Building, Gallery Place, NPR headquarters, Market Square, International Square, Columbia Square and Lafayette Center.

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

###