



# NEWS

*Service Employees International Union*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Matt Painter: 212-388-3805

Julie Karant: 646-584-9001

## **SCHOOL WORKERS HOLD ST. PATTY'S DAY RALLY FOR BETTER JOBS**

*– Team Clean Custodians Take to the Streets for Fair Wages and Affordable Health Care –*

**Philadelphia, March 17**—More than 70 Team Clean custodians and supporters rallied outside of the School Reform Commission meeting this St. Patrick's Day for a different type of "green." The workers, who clean 22 of Philadelphia's largest high schools, took action for better pay and quality, affordable health care coverage. The rally marked the public kick off of the custodians' campaign to win a new union contract that lifts them out of poverty.

"Everyday, Team Clean workers keep Philly's schools sanitary, safe and running smoothly, but despite their hard work, many are unable to make ends meet," said Wayne MacManiman, 32BJ SEIU Mid-Atlantic District Director. "Our tax dollars should not create poverty jobs, and the School District has a responsibility to help provide good jobs to these dedicated men and women."

During the rally, workers and supporters made the case that Team Clean could afford to pay a family-sustaining wage without straining the School District's budget. The District pays more than \$1 million a month for facility services. Workers wages account for less than half of that payment. After accounting for wages, administrative overhead and supplies, more than \$5 million of the School District's payment is left over every year.

The majority of Team Clean workers earn below the poverty line, and many have to rely on government anti-poverty programs. Team Clean's health care coverage is prohibitively expensive, and workers have no retirement plan.

"I haven't been able to afford medical through this company for myself and my family," said Darren McKoy, who has worked for Team Clean for four years at University City High School. "I've fallen back on bills and can't continue to pay them. I also haven't been able to put food on the table for my family without the benefit of food stamps."

In contrast, cleaners who work directly for the school district—including workers who do the same job as Team Clean employees—earn a living wage and have excellent employer-provided family health insurance. District employees also have a pension.

With more than 120,000 members, including 7,000 in Philadelphia, 32BJ SEIU is the largest property services union in the country.

###