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THOUSANDS DEMAND IMMIGRATION REFORM AND A HALT TO RAIDS

– Union Condemns Arizona’s Harsh New Law –

New York, NY— Turning up the pressure for immigration reform, more than 10,000 workers - including hundreds of 32BJ members - were joined by labor, community and immigration leaders at Foley Square’s May Day rally this afternoon to call on Congress and the Obama administration to reform the broken immigration system and put an end to the divisive enforcement-only strategy. The demonstrators also condemned Arizona’s new immigration bill, and the criminalization of undocumented immigrants in the border state.

“Arizona is a symbol of our broken immigration system,” said Hector Figueroa, Secretary Treasurer of 32BJ -- one of the largest private sector unions in the country. “As a nation of immigrants, we must reject enforcement-only tactics that break up families, disrupt businesses, divide communities, drain state and local budgets, and hamper our economic recovery. In order to fix our immigration system, Congress must act now to pass a fair and balanced reform bill that brings our outdated immigration system in line with today’s political, economic and social reality.”

Supported by more than twenty five unions, community and immigrants’ rights organizations, the Foley Square rally was one of dozens of demonstrations for immigration reform, prompted by anger over the new Arizona law, being held across the country on May Day.

“Not only is Arizona’s new immigration law ‘misguided,’ as President Obama has said, but it shows that the federal government’s failure to act on immigration is giving states and cities license to take matters into their own hands,” said Hector Figueroa, Secretary Treasurer of 32BJ SEIU. “Arizona will soon show that enforcement-only immigration tactics is a costly, divisive and counter-productive approach that in the end makes matters worse.

According to a study by UCLA, comprehensive immigration reform would grow the economy by as much as \$1.5 trillion. However, mass deportation would cost over \$240 billion taxpayer dollars, take decades to achieve, and tear apart millions of American families. It would also result in \$2.6 trillion in lost economic activity over ten years, creating further instability and job loss.

With more than 120,000 members in eight states, including many immigrants, 32BJ is the largest property service workers union in the country.

For more information visit www.seiu32bj.org

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