



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW JERSEY CLEANERS VOTE TO STRIKE

- Employer Proposals Fall Short; Cleaners Rally in Newark to Make Work Pay -

Newark, NJ – With their contract set to expire in just over two weeks, nearly 1,000 New Jersey commercial cleaners braved the freezing rain to rally in Newark today. Contract negotiations have been underway since October 29th for nearly 7,000 New Jersey office cleaners, who are seeking more full-time jobs, wage increases that will help get them ahead of the rising cost of living and fully employer-paid family health insurance for more employees.

During the rally at Bears and Eagles Stadium, the cleaners voted unanimously to give their bargaining committee the power to call for a strike, if necessary. A strike could affect more than 400 office buildings and facilities throughout New Jersey, including Hudson, Morris, Essex, Bergen, Mercer, Middlesex and other counties. The current contract expires at midnight on December 31, 2007 and a strike could happen as early as New Year's Day.

“With the New Jersey real estate market prospering, cleaning contractors should not hold back on a real raise for hard-working cleaners,” said Kevin Brown, Local 32BJ New Jersey Director. “We are ready to fight for wage hikes and more full-time jobs, both of which will help lift workers out of poverty.”

Local 32BJ cleaners have rejected proposals by contractors that would provide an inadequate wage increase and do nothing to help create more full time jobs. The two sides are scheduled to meet again on December 17th.

“We don't want to strike, but we will if we have to,” said Maritza Palacios, a member of the bargaining committee. “We're ready to do what's necessary to get real raises for our families.”

The Northern/Central New Jersey real estate market is seeing a favorable upswing, with vacancy rates are at their lowest since 2002 and rental rates on the rise. Further, rents for northern New Jersey office space is projected to increase 17% from 2007 to 2011.

New Jersey is one of six markets in the northeast to negotiate a new commercial contract this fall. Most of the contracts – which cover nearly 50,000 commercial members from Hartford, CT to Washington, DC – are set to expire on December 31, 2007. Currently, more than 150,000 people – workers and their family members – receive health care through 32BJ commercial contracts.

With more than 85,000 members in six states and Washington, DC, including more than 7,000 workers in New Jersey, Local 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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