

MEDIA ADVISORY FOR: TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2018

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MASSIVE ‘STAND UNITED FOR LA COUNTY’ MARCH TO DOMINATE DTLA CIVIC CENTER – MORE THAN 2,000 EXPECTED TO RALLY AT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS’ MEETING BEFORE CONTRACTS EXPIRE

Workers from All Corners of L.A. County Will Stand United for Quality Public Services, Real Middle-Class Jobs and Respect on the Job as They Remind the Board of Supervisors: ‘We Are the Safety Net’

LOS ANGELES—L.A. County Public Workers will take to the streets this Tuesday morning for a massive “Stand United for LA County” march and rally which will shut down a portion of Grand Park and rock the downtown L.A. Civic Center to its core. Over 1,000 workers will march *en masse* to demonstrate their resolve to fight for a fair contract. Current contracts for over 60,000 L.A. County workers represented by SEIU Local 721 expire at the end of this month – with ramifications that could affect nearly every department across L.A. County’s 4,751-square-mile service area.

The members of SEIU 721 know that Los Angeles County works because they do. They will not allow the notorious “race to the bottom” mindset to affect everything they have worked so hard to earn. Working conditions erode when the “race to the bottom” philosophy seeps into the public sector, affecting the quality of services provided to the public. **Nurses in L.A. County’s correctional facilities report urine and feces regularly thrown at them by patients while maintenance workers regularly are expected to do their jobs with perpetually malfunctioning equipment. Meanwhile, social workers working directly with vulnerable children and families across L.A. County report that daunting caseload numbers – which regularly exceed the State of California’s recommended standards – are endangering their ability to effectively serve their clients.**

WHO: 1,000+ SEIU Local 721 Members (including Registered Nurses, librarians, parks & recreation staff, clerks, social workers, public assistance eligibility workers, custodians, coroner employees and more)

WHAT: “Stand United for L.A. County” March and Rally
Visuals include:

- A “We Are the Safety Net” banner at the start of the march
- Three gigantic 15’x30’ floating banners held aloft by huge helium balloons
- 12-foot-tall “Lucha the Puppet” showing off her Union Strong solidarity

WHEN: Tuesday, September 25, 2018
Rally at 9 A.M. – **March at 9:45 A.M.** – Board of Supervisors testimony at 10:30 A.M.

WHERE: Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
(Outside the Board of Supervisors’ Meeting Room – between Hill St. and Grand Ave.)
500 W. Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012

BACKGROUND: The “race to the bottom” mentality has already devastated countless American communities – and SEIU Local 721 members will not allow it to take root in Los Angeles County. The members of SEIU 721 know that, for generations, L.A. County jobs have provided a pathway to a middle-class future and have even set the standard for what other public sector jobs should look like. But L.A. County’s skyrocketing cost of living is causing our members to fall behind.

Left unchecked, the phenomenon of rising prices outpacing increases in compensation will significantly diminish the ranks of the middle class, a mainstay of L.A. County’s social fabric since the end of the Second World War. **Everyone suffers when the workforce has fewer dollars to put back into L.A. County’s economy.** This practice also puts L.A. County at risk of losing experienced workers to private sector companies offering better wages, especially in the health care field – wasting taxpayer dollars since the public sector is, in effect, subsidizing job training for the private sector when it loses seasoned workers to them.

As the rising cost of living diminishes workers’ job satisfaction, L.A. County compounds the problem by neglecting our members’ valid concerns about working conditions for years all while keeping them under constant threat of privatization. Given that working conditions are oftentimes just as important as compensation and benefits, we once again risk losing our workforce to the private sector. **The general public arguably suffers the most. Public services erode even further while the private sector reaps the benefits of formerly public workers’ institutional knowledge and experience. Entire communities are left to struggle with lower service levels and the inconsistencies that arise with high worker turnover**

Despite a growing economy, workers are feeling very unstable – a condition made worse as L.A. County continues to contract out work that should be done in-house. **When department heads are ordered to keep temporary employees permanently on the public payroll, they put good union jobs at risk of becoming poverty jobs. Our workforce overwhelmingly lives in L.A. County so the dollars our public workers earn are put right back into the local economy.** But when the Board of Supervisors supports privatization-in-practice, they demonstrate that they view fair compensation for workers as an unnecessary expense rather than the economic generator it truly is – and they heighten feelings of job insecurity among the workforce.

As they rally directly outside the steps of the L.A. County Board of Supervisors meeting room, the members of SEIU Local 721 will call attention to these instances of blatantly deplorable working conditions, and more. On September 25, 2018, they will demonstrate their power and resolve by standing united for quality public services, for real middle-class jobs and for respect at work during a march and rally that is guaranteed to be remembered for many years to come.

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