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**Community Leaders From Around Los Angeles To
Join Hotel Workers as Living Wage Fast Moves Into Day Four**

Hotels Seek to Repeal Landmark Wage Law With Ballot Referendum

**21 California Congressional Members Urge Hotels to
Drop Referendum as Workers Continue Weeklong Fast**

Los Angeles—Community leaders from around Los Angeles today joined LAX hotel workers, adding their support to a fast in support of the recently passed living wage law. The fasting workers are staying outside the Westin LAX for the duration of the fast, and participating with community, faith and religious leaders in daily gatherings outside the Westin LAX, the Hilton LAX and other Century Boulevard hotels throughout the week.

The seven-day water-only fast began on December 6, with sixteen workers vowing to go without food to demonstrate their determination to secure a living wage and better lives for their families and communities.

On November 22, the Los Angeles City Council passed a living wage ordinance for Century Boulevard hotel workers as a first step in lifting these workers out of poverty. The legislation, which would raise wages to \$10.64 an hour (or \$9.39 for those with employer-provided health benefits), was signed into law by Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa on November 27.

Century Boulevard hotels and other business groups, however, are now seeking to repeal the law through a ballot referendum.

In a letter released by Congresswoman Hilda Solis, 21 members of California's congressional delegation backed the new wage law. "Fair wages are essential to a just society and are fundamental to the growth of the middle class," the letter states. "We applaud you and the Los Angeles City Council for supporting the LAX hotel workers living wage and support efforts to ensure that the new living wage ordinance is enacted."

The fast by LAX hotel workers will end on December 12, and is dedicated to the memory of Margarita Uriostegui, a Radisson LAX housekeeper who tragically died two days after the September 28 civil disobedience.

“Margarita was an inspiration to us all, and we will continue her struggle and honor her memory over these seven days with our fast,” said Josefa Galindo, who worked with Margarita at the Radisson LAX.

Hotel workers on Century Boulevard work full time, yet many of them still live in poverty. Hotel workers in the LAX/PCH submarket earn 20% less than their counterparts in downtown L.A. Average annual earnings for LAX/PCH workers is \$20,328 – barely above the federal \$20,000 federal poverty threshold for a family of four. Some workers qualify for multiple government assistance programs.

The nearby communities of Lennox, Inglewood and Hawthorne, where a large number of these workers live, suffer high rates of poverty, crime and overcrowding. One in four residents in these communities lives below the federal poverty line, a measure of extreme poverty, while more than 40% of children come from poor households. Median household income is 25% lower than in L.A. County as a whole.

On Friday, Assemblymembers Julia Brownley, Mike Eng, Tony Mendoza, Anthony Portantino and Curren Price and former Assemblymember Jackie Goldberg visited the workers in front of the LAX Westin Hotel. The visit by state lawmakers followed events on Thursday in which hundreds of workers came down to Century Boulevard to show their support for the fasting workers, and to speak of their hopes for a living wage and a better life for their families, as photos and notes were placed on the seven-foot wall. Every day of the fast, new panels will be added to the wall expressing support for the hotel workers from community members, faith leaders, elected officials and others.

“It is my dream to give my son a better life,” said Alicia Melgarejo, a single mother who earns \$9.60 an hour after working seven years as a housekeeper at the Hilton LAX. “This is what every mother hopes for, and a living wage will help me fulfill this dream.”

Workers participating in the fast acknowledge that it will be a difficult experience, but nevertheless have expressed their determination to make it through the week.

“Often the struggles that are the most worth fighting for are the ones that test us the most,” said Regla Soto, a housekeeper at the Westin LAX for the past 20 years and a mother of three who earns \$9.60 an hour. “The struggle that lies ahead of us is a long and difficult one, but we have come too far to turn back now.”

For complete information on the living wage fast, please visit
www.LivingWageFast.com

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