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Twelve LAX Hotel Workers Told They No Longer Have Job

Workers at Four Points Sheraton LAX Let Go by New Owners as Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez Urges Owners to Return Living Wage Supporters to Work

Decision Comes on Same Day That Century Hotel Workers Will End Seven-Day Fast In Support of the Living Wage

Los Angeles—Twelve workers at the Four Points Sheraton LAX hotel were told today they no longer have jobs by the new owner of the 573-room hotel, American Property Management LLC, which took control of the hotel today.

All 12 of the Four Points workers who were told not to return to their jobs were strong supporters of the living wage ordinance and the effort to win better working conditions. One of the employees, Barbara J Moore, has worked at the Four Points for 20 years and earns \$9.50 an hour as a PBX operator.

“I don’t understand why the hotel would do this. My co-workers and I work hard to provide good service to the guests, even though we struggle to support ourselves on the wages we are paid. But this will not stop us from fighting for a living wage and better conditions.”

California Assembly Speaker Fabian Nuñez met with hotel management today and urged them to let the workers return to work.

The Four Points employees were informed of the hotel’s decision on the same day that workers from several LAX hotels will conclude a seven-day fast in support of the recently enacted Century Boulevard living wage law, which is being challenged by the hotels and other business groups.

Today at 5 p.m., Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa will lead the closing ceremonies of the fast with faith leaders and more than 500 workers and community leaders from across the city.

“The action by the new owners of the Four Points Sheraton LAX exemplifies why we need legislation that protects the basic rights of working people,” said Vivian Rothstein, Deputy Director of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy. “For Los Angeles to be a great city, working people must be treated with respect and dignity.”

The Four Points is one of 13 hotels on Century Boulevard covered by a living wage ordinance that was passed last month by the City Council. The legislation was passed as a first step in lifting these workers out of poverty, and signed into law by Mayor Villaraigosa on November 27. The law includes an anti-retaliation provision that prohibits employers from retaliating against workers for advocating for the living wage. The Council also passed a worker retention designed to ensure that workers would not lose their jobs when hotels are sold. The living wage and worker retention laws are both scheduled to take effect December 30 unless challenged.

Century Boulevard hotels and other business groups are now seeking to repeal the living wage law through a ballot referendum, jeopardizing the living wages of these workers and their hopes to provide a better life for their families. This is one of the few attempts to overturn living wage legislation, which has been enacted by more than 150 cities and counties across the country over the past 12 years. The repeal effort has triggered a response from state and national leaders, with 22 members of California's congressional delegation urging the hotels to drop the referendum and figures such as former Senator John Edwards and SEIU President Andy Stern taking strong public positions in support of the living wage law.

Today 16 Century Boulevard hotel workers on Century Boulevard near Los Angeles International Airport will conclude a seven-day water-only fast, which began on December 6. Workers chose to go without food for a week to continue their effort to secure a living wage, and to honor the memory of Margarita Uriostegui, a co-worker who tragically died two days after the September 28 civil disobedience.

Century Boulevard hotel workers earn 20% less than their counterparts in downtown L.A., and 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.

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