



For immediate release:  
March 27, 2007

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## **Federal Charges Filed Against LAX Hilton for Alleged Illegal Firing of Two Hotel Workers Who Fasted for a Living Wage**

*Firings Come Less than One Month after General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board Issues Complaint against LAX Hilton for Alleged Threat of Violence and Physical Attack against Workers*

*Faith and Community Leaders Call LAX Hilton the  
'Worst Employer in Los Angeles'*

*Los Angeles*—UNITE HERE will file formal charges with the National Labor Relations Board today, alleging that two hotel workers were unlawfully fired because of their union activity, including their support for the City's living wage ordinance. Michael Kaib, a server at the LAX Hilton, and Alicia Melgarejo, a housekeeper at the LAX Hilton, were two of the 16 workers who fasted for a living wage in December of last year. On March 13, both workers were fired by the LAX Hilton.

The charges filed by the union regarding the firing of these two workers comes less than one month after the General Counsel of the NLRB issued a complaint against the LAX Hilton for 22 alleged separate incidents of interference and coercion against hotel workers who supported the union. The complaint was issued after a Regional Office of the NLRB investigated charges filed by the union and subsequently decided that there was enough merit in the allegations to hold a formal hearing on the charges.

The NLRB General Counsel's complaint against the hotel alleges that management at the Hilton LAX physically assaulted and threatened violence against workers. The complaint also included an allegation that the LAX Hilton physically prevented workers from entering the hotel to pick up their paychecks because they wore union t-shirts.

"In April of last year, my coworkers and I tried to meet with management to discuss the need for equipment to do our jobs properly, and I was pushed by a kitchen manager. Then just a few weeks ago after attending a picket line in support of the union, and upon returning to work, I was arrested by six police officers in front of my coworkers. The

hotel said I was fired for hitting a security guard. The hotel is doing this to try to scare us, but we won't be intimidated and we will keep standing up for our rights," said Kaib.

The fired workers believe they were targeted because of their union organizing efforts and their active support for the city's living wage law. Both workers had taken active roles in the two-year-old union organizing drive at the hotel, participating in picket lines and press conferences outside of the hotel, in plain view of management and security guards. Melgarejo and Kaib were also vocal supporters of the city's living wage ordinance, fasting for seven days in December of last year in support of a living wage for hotel workers on Century Boulevard.

The LAX Hilton accused Melgarejo of stealing hotel towels, an allegation which she vehemently denies. Melgarejo asked management to show her the video evidence they claimed to have of her stealing towels, but she was denied access to the supposed evidence and was later fired. "I have worked at the LAX Hilton for almost eight years as a housekeeper. I have never even received a warning and have a good clean work record because I am a good worker. Now I have been fired for something I didn't do, even though I have given years of my life to making this hotel successful. It's just not right," said Melgarejo.

Faith and community leaders joined workers today at the LAX Hilton to announce that the union had filed federal charges against the hotel. Reverend Peter Rood, the Rector from Holy Nativity Church in Westchester, expressed outrage at the aggressive tactics the LAX Hilton has used to prevent their workers from receiving a living wage and exercising their rights under federal law to join a union. "The LAX Hilton has proven itself to be the worst employer in Los Angeles. We will not stand idly by while this hotel fires workers, physically assaults workers and threatens violence against workers who support the union. These workers live and work in our community, and we will stand by them and continue the boycott of this hotel until justice is served," said Reverend Rood.