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Security Officers Ratify Agreement with Security Contractors for New Contract

*Contract Will Mean Regular Wage Increases, More Affordable Health
Insurance, and Paid Leave for Officers*

December 8, 2008 (Boston, Mass.) – More than 1,200 security officers from Boston and Cambridge ratified an agreement with security contractors AlliedBarton, Securitas, and Northeast Security for a new contract. This is the first major contract that security officers have negotiated with contractors since becoming a part of Service Employee International Union (SEIU) Local 615 last summer.

“This agreement gives me some hope for the future for myself, my family, and my community,” said James White, an officer in downtown Boston. “The work we provide, protecting our neighbors, is important and valuable. I am so happy that we were able to reach an agreement that acknowledges the value of our work and also transforms these from dead-ends jobs to ones with career growth potential.”

“This is an amazing moment in which the efforts of workers and their communities have now transformed an industry,” said Rocio Saenz, president of SEIU Local 615. “Because of their sacrifice, the next generation of officers who come to work in these towers will never know what it is like to work for years without a raise, to be without paid holidays, or to be stuck with substandard healthcare.”

Officers had bargained over wage increases and better benefits, including sick days and vacation time, holiday leave, and access to quality health insurance. The new contract

will start officers, who had been making between \$11 and \$12 per hour, at \$12.75 per hour on January 1, with guaranteed \$.50 raises each year until 2013. Additionally, officers now have access to affordable individual and family health insurance. Finally, officers won paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave. Many officers had gone years without taking a vacation and others had to take days off in order to take care of a sick child or parent.

Details on Security Contract

Effective date: 1/1/09. Runs to: 6/30/13

Wages: *\$12.75 an hour on 1/1/09, with guaranteed 50 cent raises each year, rising to \$14.75 by January, 2013. For the lowest paid officers, this means an immediate 27% increase and 47% more over the life of the contract. Higher paid officers will see pay go up by 18% over the life of the contract.*

Health Insurance: *Employers must offer quality health, dental and vision plans that protect officers when sick or injured. Real quality health insurance means officers won coverage that does not put them at risk of having to pay \$2,000 in fines to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for being uninsured.*

Paid Time Off:

- **Holidays:** *Security officers won seven holidays. When their building is closed on these days - which include New Years, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas - officers will be paid for the scheduled hours they would have worked. Those working on holidays will receive time and a half.*
- **Sick days:** *With one year of seniority, officers will get one paid day to take care of themselves or a sick child and can eventually accrue up to three sick days based on seniority.*
- **Vacations:** *Officers won real paid vacations for the first time. One year of seniority equals one week vacation. Officers can eventually accrue up to three weeks of vacation with seniority*

Job Security:

Officers won some important basic rights that will mean greater job security, including a grievance process to resolve disputes, on-site worker representation, and arbitration. The result is that officers can now no longer be written up, suspended, or fired without any protection.

Overtime and schedules: *Officers won overtime pay, not in comp time, as is the current practice. Additionally, officers received agreements on reasonable scheduling, including restricting work hours to no more than 16 hours in a day, paid half hour meal breaks, no requirement to stand at a post for unreasonable period.*

Job Advancement: *Officers won opportunities for job advancement, through a Job Advancement list. Employers must give first consideration to those on list in seniority order.*

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With 2 million members, SEIU is the fastest growing Union in the United States, and the largest union of property service workers in the United States. SEIU Local 615 represents 16,000 property service workers in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island. The organization of security officers to join SEIU Local 615 is the largest effort to unionize African Americans in the city of Boston's history.

