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Security Officers, SEIU Local 615 Thank Religious, Community Leaders, Elected Officials for Support In Full Page Advertisement

Candlelight Vigil Calls on Real Estate Industry to Support Officers' Campaign To Eradicate Poverty Wage Jobs with Meager Benefits

Boston, Mass. (November 13, 2008) - Security officers, who protect multi-billion dollar properties in Boston and Cambridge, thanked the religious and community leaders and elected officials who have pledged to stand up and fight with them in a full page advertisement in the Boston Metro. The ad comes in the wake of a candlelight vigil held by officers, who are members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 615, who called on the real estate industry to support the officers in their efforts to eradicate poverty wage jobs with meager benefits.

Signers of the pledge include Reverend William E. Dickerson II of Greater Love Tabernacle, Reverend Doctor Gregory G. Groover, Sr. of the Charles Street AME Church, Reverend Hurmon Hamilton of Roxbury Presbyterian Church, Reverend Doctor Ray A. Hammond of Bethel AME Church, Reverend J. Bryan Hehir of the Archdiocese of Boston, Rabbi Barbara Penzner of Temple Hill el B'Nai Torah, Robert Haynes of the AFL-CIO, Rich Rogers of the Greater Boston Labor Council, and several members of both the Boston and Cambridge City Councils, among many others.

The ad reads, "Dozens of political and religious leaders and community organizations across the city have signed on to the pledge to stand with security officers as they struggle to improve their working conditions. Will you join them as they campaign for better wages, health care and more time with their families?"

Officers, Community Leaders Gather to Ask the Real Estate Industry to Support their Campaign

Security officers and community leaders gathered last night at a candlelight vigil in front of the Westin Waterfront, where the BOMA Boston Toby & Industry Awards were being held, to honor leaders in the real estate industry. The officers, along with religious and community representatives, called on the industry leaders to work with the officers to eradicate poverty wage jobs and to provide officers with benefits, like health care, that many take for granted.

Participants at the event, including Anthony Zuba of the Massachusetts Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, Rev Burns Stanfield from 4th Presbyterian in South Boston, Rev Wayne Daley from Charles St AME Church in Dochester, Rich Rogers of the Greater Boston Labor Council, and Soledad Lawrence from City Life/Vida Urbana, all called upon the industry leaders gathered at the Westin Waterfront to recognize the value of the work provided by security officers and to understand the challenges that security officers face in providing for their families.

In particular, the vigil participants focused on ensuring that officers had better access to quality health care. Currently, 23% of security officers are on MassHealth. Another 12% have no insurance whatsoever and will take the penalty under the provisions of the health insurance law in the Commonwealth. To illustrate the situation that officers are facing with regards to their health insurance coverage, the cost of one table of eight for one company to attend the BOMA awards dinner, which is \$3,000, would pay for a year's worth of health insurance for one officer.

In June, officers employed by three of the area's largest security services companies won union recognition. The new SEIU 615 members are working to improve their wages, benefits and training. Security officers are currently in the process of deciding what their next step will be to achieving a fair and reasonable contract in the coming weeks.

On average, security officers make on average between \$11 and \$12 an hour, even though they protect multimillion dollar properties in Boston and the surrounding region. Most officers are struggling to make ends meet and are working two or three jobs to do so. A good percentage of the workforce lives in communities of color which are struggling with poverty and its related increase violence. Increases in wages can have a major economic impact. For instance, a slight increase in their wages for the security officer workforce in Massachusetts, which is approximately 21,500 workers, would help the economy overall because it would put an millions of dollars in Massachusetts communities seeking to rebuild from the bottom up. More information on the campaign can be found at www.standformasecurity.org.