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Philadelphia hotel workers hold vigil for Boston's "Hyatt 100"

As part of a wave of actions across North America, workers bring the 150-foot "Hope Quilt" to Philadelphia—spotlighting pain and mistreatment of Hyatt housekeepers

Philadelphia, Nov 18, 2009 – Wednesday night, Philadelphia hotel workers held a candlelight vigil outside of the Hyatt Regency Penn's Landing demanding that Hyatt Hotels (NYSE: H) "Bring Back the Hyatt 100." Wednesday's vigil completes a week of actions by thousands of workers in a dozen North American cities. Workers offered prayers and songs, and unfurled a 150-foot long "Hope Quilt," which stitches together stories of Hyatt housekeepers and the pain they endure everyday just to provide for their families.

Hyatt fired 100 housekeepers from its three Boston area hotels after asking workers to train their replacements from an outsourcing agency. The action has ignited a national controversy for the newly public Hyatt Hotels which launched an initial public offering of its stock on November 5, 2009. Aracelly Arango, one of the "Hyatt 100", spoke at the Philadelphia vigil Wednesday night.

"The healthcare coverage we won from Hyatt is crucial for my degenerative heart condition," said Aaron Seiz, a host at the restaurant inside Hyatt Penns Landing. "I'm outraged by how Boston Hyatt workers lost their benefits. We're standing up to demand Hyatt bring them back."

"After years of service, Hyatt fired us to just to make more profits. Now I am struggling to keep my head above water. I am honored that Philadelphia workers are standing with us to demand justice," said Aracelly Arango, a housekeeper who was recently fired from the Boston Hyatt.

The firing of the "Hyatt 100" housekeepers stands as the most dramatic example of Hyatt contributing to the nation's unemployment problem and healthcare crisis. The incident has drawn the ire of workers and community leaders alike, including Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick, who said that he would call on state agencies to boycott the three Boston-area hotels if the housekeepers were not recalled.

As the *New York Times* reported, a new report in *The American Journal of Industrial Medicine* finds that hotel housekeepers are injured at work twice as often as other U.S. workers. At Philadelphia's Hyatt Regency Penns Landing, workers have won a reduction of their housekeeping workload from 18 to 16 rooms a day.

Wednesday's vigil in Philadelphia marks the end of a week of Hyatt 100 solidarity actions in cities across North America, including Boston, Los Angeles, San Antonio, San Diego, Vancouver BC, Indianapolis, Chicago, Toronto, Santa Clara and San Francisco.

Unite Here represents over 6000 hotel, gaming, and foodservice workers in Philadelphia.
For more information, visit www.hotelworkersrising.org and www.uniteherephilly.org

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