



## Local 634, School Cafeteria Employees & Noontime Aides

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## **Philadelphia Cafeteria Workers Call on SEIU to Stop Election Stunts, Focus on Raising Wage Standards for All Philadelphia Workers**

*October 6, 2009* — Today, UNITE HERE Local 634, the union of Philadelphia School Cafeteria Employees and Noontime Aides, called on SEIU to stop its electioneering stunts. Last week, SEIU made the false claim that the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Minimum Wage Benefits Standard” applies to Philadelphia School District employees, misleading many workers to anticipate awards of back pay while ignoring their own custodial workers who are actually paid below the City minimum wage. Local 634 also called for swift passage of Councilman Goode’s new bill to bring higher wages to these school employees.

Local 634 President Doris Smith praised Philadelphia Councilman W. Wilson Goode on his new proposal to extend the “21<sup>st</sup> Century Minimum Wage Benefits Standard” to employees in the Philadelphia School District. “We commend Councilman Goode’s proposed legislation that School District employees should be brought under the same living wage standards as other workers in Philadelphia. It is unfortunate that SEIU’s election stunt last week misled thousands of Philadelphia School District employees, including their own custodial workers, by promising them that there were wage violations and possible back pay. I know SEIU is trying to take our members but at least tell the truth to them,” she stated.

Last week, while hundreds of Local 634 cafeteria workers delivered a petition to the School District calling for contract improvements, SEIU issued a number of misleading and erroneous press releases that attempted to make a case that the School District could owe millions of dollars in back pay. SEIU’s actions came despite very clear language in the “Philadelphia 21<sup>st</sup> Century Minimum Wage and Benefits Standard” law that show that it unfortunately does not apply to School District employees. Councilman Goode’s new proposed resolution calling on the School Reform Commission to adopt the principles of the “21st Century” wage standard is a positive step forward for all workers in the Philadelphia School District. Councilman Goode’s proposal is a marked departure from SEIU’s misleading election stunt that spread misinformation and false promises.

Local 634 President Doris Smith noted, “Local 634 has been the only union that has fought to increase the wages of Philadelphia cafeteria workers and noontime aides. We are fighting to raise our standard once again in our current contract negotiations. We are happy to have the support of Councilman Goode in bringing attention to the need to increase the wages of our members. We wish that SEIU would focus on trying to increase the wages of the hard-working janitors it represents in the Philadelphia schools instead of disrupting and stalling negotiations for cafeteria workers.”

SEIU represents hundreds of Philadelphia school custodians. Unfortunately, many of these SEIU custodians saw wages decrease recently when the jobs were subcontracted.

Unite Here Local 634 has represented the Philadelphia School District’s 2,300 cafeteria workers and noontime aides since 1977.

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