

UNITEHERE!

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May 20, 2009

To: The American Labor Movement

From: John W. Wilhelm, President

UFCW President Joseph T. Hansen this week sent a letter following up on his diligent efforts to mediate a settlement between UNITE HERE and SEIU. All of us in UNITE HERE are extremely grateful to President Hansen for the enormous time, effort and thoughtfulness he has put into his effort to help us.

I am grateful as well for his letter of May 19, 2009. I urge you to read Joe's letter and his recommendations (attached), and I particularly want to call to your attention the following points he makes:

--His ringing endorsement of core industry jurisdiction, which leads him to recommend that present members and future organizing rights in the hotel and gaming industries belong to HERE.

"I believe workers have the best opportunity to improve their lives when they join together throughout an industry as one union. Carving up core industry jurisdiction weakens the ability of a union to combine its resources in organizing and bargaining with national employers--and it diminishes the voice workers have on the job."

SEIU's rejection of this recommendation, and its insistence on organizing competitively with UNITE HERE, is the biggest single obstacle to a settlement. This is particularly ironic, since core industry jurisdiction was one of the founding principles of Change to Win.

--His statement that SEIU's involvement makes more difficult the settlement of what began as an internal dispute in UNITE HERE. Absent SEIU's stepping in, I am confident that the internal dispute would have been resolved through UNITE HERE's Constitutional processes. SEIU is directing and financing the aggressive campaign against UNITE HERE.

--His statement that HERE must receive adequate finances. While UNITE HERE does not agree with Joe's recommendation that the Amalgamated Bank and the headquarters building in New York City should go to SEIU, the key issue for us is, as he writes, the *"future viability and health of the union,"* and so we were willing to accept his recommendation as part of a settlement.

--His statement that SEIU's aggressive attacks on UNITE HERE members in Puerto Rico, whose executive board has voted to stay with UNITE HERE, and on hotel workers organizing into UNITE HERE in Arizona, have derailed negotiations, *"actions taken by [SEIU which], if continued, would put at risk any future settlement."*

While SEIU has previously tried to take over smaller unions, its attempt to hijack the members, industries, and assets of UNITE HERE is an unprecedented hostile takeover of a North American international union. We are determined that SEIU will not succeed. I am personally grateful for President Hansen's hard work, and for the support of so many of you.