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UNITE HERE Local 634 wins Philadelphia election Thousands of Cafeteria Workers reject SEIU raid

Philadelphia — Despite an all-out effort by New York-based SEIU 32BJ, UNITE HERE Local 634 powered to a convincing election victory. Today, the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) announced the results of the election to represent the 2,300 cafeteria workers and noon time aides at the Philadelphia School District, showing UNITE HERE Local 634 as the winner. Despite months of attacks by SEIU, the members of UNITE HERE Local 634 voted by a 2:1 margin to stay with their union and rejected SEIU's anti-union behavior.

The PLRB announced 1121 votes for UNITE HERE Local 634, 551 votes for SEIU Philadelphia Joint Board, and 10 votes for no union. There were 198 challenged ballots.

“We are proud that our members have supported their union and rejected SEIU's raid,” said Emily Pridgen, a Food Service worker at Hardy Williams School. “Now we all have to work even harder to come together to fight for a fair contract with the School District. We deserve more!”

“We would like to ask our brothers and sisters in District 1201 to tell SEIU, their international union, to accept these results and drop their legal appeals, so we can all begin bargaining our new contracts,” said Dominga Gonzalez, a Noon Time Aide from Luis Muñoz Marin School.

“As a Noon Time Aide earning just \$9.52 per hour without benefits, I am excited to take this fight from the ballot box into the streets so I can earn a living wage and demand the School District treat me with respect,” said Audrey Miller from Conwell Middle School.

This is the third noteworthy victory for UNITE HERE in recent months in its struggle against SEIU. In August, 2000 Delaware North company food service workers ratified a contract with UNITE HERE, thwarting a SEIU raid in the process. Three weeks ago, 2300 members of Local 74 in St. Louis voted to reaffirm their affiliation with UNITE HERE. Together with today's win, these 6600 workers join over 23,000 others across North America who have resisted SEIU and returned to or stayed with UNITE HERE.

In a message to UNITE HERE President John Wilhelm, Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO noted, "I am proud that workers supported their union, UNITE HERE Local 634, and took a stand against improper and counterproductive raids. Unions should be working together to improve workers' lives, not conducting raids against workers who already have a union."

Since 1977, UNITE HERE Local 634 has represented the 2,300 cafeteria workers in the Philadelphia School District. UNITE HERE represents food service, hotel, gaming, laundry, airport, manufacturing and textile workers across North America, including 8,000 workers in the Philadelphia region. In July 2009, UNITE HERE re-affiliated with the AFL-CIO at the national level. For more information visit: www.unitehere.org or www.local634.org

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