



NEWS

Service Employees International Union

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WORKERS WEIGH-IN ON PREVAILING WAGE BILL

– City Council Committee Vote Expected on Wednesday –

Pittsburgh, PA – Workers from hotels, grocery stores and commercial office buildings shared their personal experiences with prevailing wages at this morning’s City Council public hearing on the prevailing wage bill, which is now sponsored by all nine Council Members. The bill, which would create jobs that provide good wages, health care and other benefits to workers employed at new, city-subsidized developments and to workers contracted to work for the City of Pittsburgh, was re-introduced in City Council last week. City Council members are expected to vote on the bill in committee on Wednesday.

“For seven years, I made \$7.35 an hour, and every week, I worried about how to pay for the groceries,” said Bridget Noel, a cleaner at the University of Pittsburgh and a single-mother of three. “I have so many worries lifted off me now that I have a decent pay-check coming in.”

The prevailing wage bill being considered by City Council would require developers and contractors to pay the private-sector going rate to building service, food service, hotel and grocery workers. Based on current industry standards in Pittsburgh, workers would earn between \$10 and \$13 an hour and receive health care benefits.

“I’ve been able to buy a home, raise a family and now retire without worrying because I had a good job,” said Joyce Edwards, who worked at the Southside Giant Eagle for 35 years. “We need to make sure that public money is creating jobs like that, not dead-end jobs with low wages.”

The prevailing wage bill received a unanimous vote in City Council in December before a last-minute New Year’s Eve veto from the Mayor. Since the bill was re-introduced by Council President Harris, all nine Council Members have signed-on as co-sponsors.

“My life and my family were on a different track before I got a job at PNC Park,” said Tim Jones, a food service worker at PNC Park. “When I was making minimum wage, I was always trying to pick up extra work so we could try to move out of public housing. After a year with a steady job, we were able to buy a house in Sheriden, and my son’s going to college.”

Pittsburgh United, a coalition of faith, labor, environmental and community organizations, including 32BJ Service Employees International Union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23 and Workers United, is advocating for this bill as part of broader economic development reform.

“The prevailing wage bill promotes good business standards and responsible use of tax dollars,” said Reverend John Welch, Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) President. “We can’t allow businesses to use our tax dollars to keep Pittsburgh families in poverty any longer.”

With more than 120,000 members, including 5,000 in Western Pennsylvania, 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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