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## **OPEIU Local 2 employees working at SEIU headquarters prepare to strike after latest contract offer rejected**

*Management fails in its attempt to use back-pay extortion in order to extort union workers into accepting latest “best, last and final” union-busting contract proposal*

**NATIONAL** – Today, an overwhelming majority of OPEIU Local 2-represented staff working at SEIU voted to reject management’s latest contract offer- one which did nothing to halt the disturbing levels of Local 2 union erosion and eliminates job protection measures for all future hires.

Local 2 has seen its membership of SEIU employees drop from 133 in 2009 to 55 today. The sharp decline is a direct result of the misclassification of new hires as “managers” and outsourcing work to non-union consultants. SEIU staff is now made up of 70% managers as SEIU’s leadership has systematically cut the number of union staff positions in favor of at-will managerial bloat and consultants in order to circumvent placing positions in the bargaining unit. According to financial disclosures with the Department of Labor, SEIU has spent almost \$45 million combined on outsourcing work in the last two years.

“I don’t understand how SEIU can criticize big corporations like the major airlines for outsourcing their good union jobs to irresponsible non-union contractors when they are doing the same thing within their own building,” said Britt Gordon-McKeon, a research staffer and Local 2 bargaining committee member. “SEIU needs to live their own values if they expect others to do the same.”

According to the group of workers, SEIU management has flat-out rejected all Local 2 sponsored measures to combat this trend, and has insisted on creating a two-tiered system for key layoff protections. The current proposals would eliminate key job protection measures for all future Local 2 hires—all but guaranteeing that the rapid Local 2 unit erosion would escalate in the coming years.

“When I started at SEIU we had more than 140 members, now we are down to 55,” said Andy Bonior, a Communications Specialist and Local 2 member. “SEIU’s big theme for their political program for the 2020 elections is ‘Unions for All’, but I can’t understand how they expect candidates to take them seriously while they desperately attempt to rid themselves of their own staff union. You have to practice what you preach.”

In addition to insisting on the two-tiered system that would continue to shrink Local 2 membership, SEIU management’s “last, best, final” offer also included an arbitrary deadline (Friday, May 24th) for Local 2 ratification and threatened to withhold back-pay for the below-cost-of-living raises that have been held up by SEIU for almost two years. This attempt to pressure Local 2 members into selling out the future of their union ended up backfiring, as the membership saw it as nothing but an example of the types of wage theft and extortion anti-union companies have been using for years.

“It was a move straight out of the classic union-busters playbook,” said David Hoskins, an SEIU research staffer and Local 2 chief shop steward. “and it’s outrageous that SEIU management is diverting precious time and resources away from building the labor movement in this country in an attempt to essentially extort its own union staff into accepting concessions that wouldn’t save SEIU a dime or improve the life of a single worker in this country,”

Following today’s vote, members of Local 2 voted to reauthorize a strike as pursuant to OPEIU Local 2 procedures. A strike date has not yet been announced.

**BACKGROUND:**

In a significant show of strength and unity, OPEIU Local 2 members who work at SEIU headquarters voted to authorize a strike after rejecting management’s best and final offer back [in March](#). The vote revealed the extent of labor unrest inside SEIU’s own office as management has eliminated the majority of union jobs in favor of outsourcing the work to consultants or misclassifying workers as managers.

Over the last five years, [jobs for union members at SEIU](#) have been cut in half: from 254 to 120. The remaining number of union workers who are represented by OPEIU Local 2 has declined drastically since 2005, from 141 members to 55 currently. SEIU staff is now made up of 70% managers as SEIU’s leadership has systematically cut the number of union staff positions in favor of at-will managerial bloat and consultants.

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*OPEIU Local 2 ("Local 2") represents about 8,000 working people in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. We negotiate and enforce contracts, and organize and train members, and develop leadership that extends beyond the workplace. We are constantly working to defend and advocate for not only our members' rights, but for the rights of all working people as well.*