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To underscore shared contract demands...

City Workers, Outraged Residents, & Religious Leaders Take to the Streets to Clean Up Blight; Vow to “Bargain Together for the Common Good”

On first day of joint bargaining between City unions and officials, Fix LA coalition challenges LA leaders to restore services to pre-recession levels, expand good civilian jobs and stand up to Wall Street

South LA: Elected members of six unions representing a wide range of city workers--from librarians to sanitation truck drivers to crossing guards— took a lunch break from bargaining a new contract today to help clergy and community stakeholders clean one of the city’s many trash-strewn alleys.

Their joint message to Mayor Garcetti and the City Council: Stop corporate giveaways and recover taxpayer revenue from Wall Street to restore vital city services that Angelenos need.

“City workers are the key to a clean, healthy, and safe Los Angeles,” said SEIU Local 721 bargaining team member Jake Miller, who works in Animal Services. “But unless the City chooses to fix our street instead of funding Wall Street, our efforts will fall short.”

The cleanup took place at 101st and San Pedro Streets. The city dramatically cut back its practice of removing debris from alleys and providing many other services to save money after the onset of the Great Recession.

Austerity measures have drastically reduced middle-class jobs in LA and cut overall spending by 19 percent, with trash clearing slashed by 61 percent. Such figures prompted the City Coalition of Unions to draft bargaining proposals with Fix LA—a growing coalition of community groups, faith-based organizations and working people—and bring neighborhood stakeholders with them to the table.

Volunteers clad in masks, gloves and coveralls bearing the slogan “We’re Bargaining to Fix LA” —including members of the Alliance for Californians for Community Empowerment, Service Employees International Union Local 721, AFSCME Joint Council 36, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Teamsters Local 911, and the Community Coalition— hauled a trailer-load of trash and construction materials from the alley.

Members of the Fix LA coalition then drove the trailer to Bank of New York Mellon on Bunker Hill to deliver the trash to bank officials. They called for the bank to pay the cleanup bill as a way to begin correcting the harm perpetrated by Wall Street on the city. Eight years ago, LA entered into a toxic interest rate swap deal with the bank that costs taxpayers \$5 million a year. The Fix LA Coalition has called upon the bank to release LA from the deal—and has urged City leaders to stop doing business with the bank if it won’t.

“For years big companies have used our community as a dumping ground, literally and figuratively, so we’re showing our elected leaders how we want to Fix LA,” said nearby resident Lynette Steele. “Instead of cutting services and jobs for workers and residents, it’s time to go after the entities responsible for making LA such a mess: the big banks.”

The group called on city leaders to restore vital services to pre-recession levels—as well as other services including speed bump installation, more frequent tree trimming, sidewalk repair, and assignment of crossing guards at dangerous intersections.

“We could be using the millions we give away to Wall Street to hire librarians, crossing guards, street services and other workers vital to keeping the city running and our children safe,” said Alice Goff, President of AFSCME Local 3090, a partner of the Coalition.

Joint contract negotiations are scheduled to resume on August 13. Vowing to “bargain for the common good,” the coalition promises that both workers and community stakeholders will be present at the bargaining table to defend taxpayers from Wall Street greed whether officials want them there or not.

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