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MORE THAN 1,000 OUTRAGED RESIDENTS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND CITY WORKERS DESCEND ON BUNKER HILL FINANCIAL DISTRICT AND CITY HALL, DECLARE “LA IS NOT WALL STREET’S ATM,” URGE CITY LEADERS TO RESTORE VITAL CITY SERVICES AND MIDDLE-CLASS JOBS

The marchers’ message to Mayor Garcetti and the City Council: Stand up for LA’s working families and neighborhoods, stop corporate giveaways and recover taxpayer revenue from big banks and corporations to restore the vital city services that Angelenos need.

LOS ANGELES – More than 1,000 members of the Fix LA coalition—community members, religious leaders, and LA City workers—marched to name and shame the banks they describe as the “Grim Reapers of Wall Street,” calling attention to the hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars the city pays to banks each year while simultaneously making drastic cuts to parks and children’s recreational programs, city sewage inspections, school crossing guards and maintenance of streets and alleyways. Nearly 10,000 petitions, calling on the City to Fix LA, signed by Los Angeles residents and city workers were presented to Mayor Garcetti’s office.

The marchers—bearing a giant Grim Reaper puppet representing the big banks that are sucking the life out of Los Angeles—urged City Hall to step up and protect City residents and workers from Wall Street’s greed. The marchers included members of over 25 community organizations as well as crossing guards, librarians, parks and recreation workers and other City workers.

“As someone who lives and works in LA, it pains me to see potholes, alleys full of trash, and schools without crossing guards,” said Theresa Grant, who works for the Department of Transportation. “It’s time for our leaders to stop shoveling money at Wall Street and invest it right here at home where it’s needed—in our streets, in our parks and in our schools.”

The Fix LA marchers stopped at six banks that they describe as the “Dirty Half-Dozen”—Bank of America, Citi, JP Morgan Chase, Wells Fargo, US Bank and Bank of New York Mellon. These banks played leading roles in bringing on the economic crash of 2008 that devastated the U.S. economy. At each bank, the marchers delivered a giant Grim Reaper cutout and a tombstone listing the crimes committed by the institution—including the billions of dollars the banks have received in taxpayer bailout money.

“Our communities are suffering from a double burden,” said Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez, Fix LA member and pastor of Centro Cristiano Bet-El in South Gate. “First they were devastated when Wall Street banks crashed our economy in 2008 and now they are suffering because the City is making severe cuts to essential services while paying out hundreds of millions to the very same banks.”

After stopping at the banks, the marchers descended through Grand Park—where they were cheered on by Los Angeles County workers from the adjacent Stanley Mosk Courthouse and Office of the LA County Treasurer—and rallied at City Hall. The rally was led by María Elena Durazo, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO and Peggy Mears, a member of the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE).

Speakers included community, faith and labor leaders, as well as “LA’s Everyday Heroes,” average citizens and workers wearing capes bearing a Fix LA superhero logo who are taking a stand against the Goliath banks and fighting for healthy communities and bright futures for their children. The Everyday Heroes capped the rally by walking with their children to the doors of City Hall to deliver 10,000 Fix LA petitions and a plea for City leaders: Stand up to Wall Street and stand with the people of Los Angeles to create communities that are safe, clean, healthy and financially sustainable for all.

The march comes as bargaining is underway between the City of Los Angeles and the Coalition of LA City Unions, which represents approximately 20,000 city workers—60% of LA’s workforce. The Fix LA coalition, made up of those unions and a growing array of community organizations, have advanced proposals at the bargaining table that include restoring vital LA City services to pre-recession levels through job creation programs that employ local residents, promoting a minimum \$15 wage, putting crossing guards at every school and stop saddling taxpayers with bank foreclosure costs.

“The Teamsters are here to fight for the future of LA,” said Randy Cammack, President of Joint Council 42 Teamsters and Secretary -Treasurer of Teamsters Local 63. “Whether it’s today with our trucks, tomorrow at the bargaining table, or the day after on the picket line, we are building a movement in which the people who move containers out of the Port of Los Angeles are building power with the men and women who haul trash for the City. We won’t allow Wall Street and the giant corporations -- or the politicians who are beholden to them -- rob Angelenos of the American Dream.”

Cuts to LA City services have had a severe impact on already underserved communities. Nearly 80% of the LA City civilian workforce is made up of people of color, with African-Americans and Latinos making up over 60% including a significant number of single-parent households and first-generation immigrants.

“It’s time for City leaders to make a choice: Wall Street vs. our streets,” said Cheryl Parisi, chair of Coalition of LA City Unions. “We won’t allow the City to balance the budget on the backs of our workers and hurt the local economy while giving banks a free pass to treat our City like an ATM. With LA’s economy on an upswing, revenues far exceeding expectations and a record-high reserve fund, it’s time for the city to promote a program for shared prosperity.”

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