



Space Needle Workers, Seattle City Councilmembers Pledge Continued Fight for Job Security

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SEATTLE—Workers and members of the Seattle City Council gathered at the base of the Space Needle Tuesday to continue the fight for job security at the symbol of Seattle.

One week ago, Space Needle workers won their first raises in over three years. On July 14, the Space Needle Corporation declared impasse and implemented its latest bargaining proposal. The proposal included immediate pay increases, retro pay going back to the expiration of the last union contract in 2011, and scheduled raises going forward. Workers will receive their first raises on July 24.

Space Needle workers were joined by Seattle City Councilmembers Jean Godden, Bruce Harrell, Kshama Sawant and Mike O’Brien and by City Council candidate Sandy Brown.

Space Needle valet cashier Veronica Chernichenko described how hard it was for her to be in school and work two jobs to support her family during the period the Space Needle was withholding raises.

“Last week, we received word that our demand for a raise had finally gotten through, and that the company would begin to pay us what we actually deserve for all the hard work we do. This raise completely changed everything for me. I’ve reduced my hours drastically at my second job thanks to my hourly wage increasing.”

Though the Space Needle has had authorization from the union to implement stand-alone raises since 2013, management has instead used the pretense of impasse to couple the raises with other proposals that Space Needle workers have found to be unacceptable in bargaining.

The proposal that the Space Needle is unilaterally implementing does not address workers’ need for job security protections and imposes unprecedented barriers to communication between workers and union representatives.

“These employees are asking for security. They don’t know what’s going to happen in a year or two years,” said Councilmember Bruce Harrell. “These folks have given their blood, sweat and tears, their resources, their life towards serving and they do their jobs quite well. We need security.”

“Their fight is our fight. Their fight is Seattle’s fight. And we stand with them every step of the way,” said Councilmember Kshama Sawant.

Councilmembers Nick Licata and John Okamoto were unable to attend Tuesday's event but each sent a letter to Space Needle CEO Ron Severt in support of workers.

"At the Space Needle, we've learned that by standing together, we can win what is right and fair. We have a city and elected officials who support us in having real job security so that these good jobs stay that way. And we're here today to make sure everyone knows that we'll be in this one day longer, until we win the guarantee of job security," said Chernichenko.

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UNITE HERE Local 8, the hospitality union of the Pacific Northwest, represents nearly 5,000 workers in hospitality and foodservice throughout Washington and Oregon, including SkyCity restaurant employees, banquet servers, elevator operators, greeters, and other workers at the Space Needle. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://www.unitehere8.org>