

## **MEDIA ADVISORY FOR: Wednesday, October 4, 2017**

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### **Angelenos to Hold 'Remember Puerto Rico!' Funeral Procession and 14-Minute Die-In at Roybal Federal Building to Urge for More Disaster Aid and Total Debt Cancellation in Wake of Hurricane Maria Catastrophe**

**Los Angeles**—Frontline public service providers from a variety of organized labor groups will hold a "Remember Puerto Rico!" funeral procession and 14-minute die-in in the heart of downtown Los Angeles to call attention to the plight of the 3.4 million U.S. citizens in Puerto Rico whose lives have been devastated by Hurricane Maria. Most are still living without electricity or drinking water as they continue facing shortages in both food and fuel – and endure an almost non-existent telecommunications system. **Mock funeral procession and die-in participants will demand that federal authorities relieve and rebuild Puerto Rico by supplying disaster relief more quickly and effectively – and that the disaster relief includes a \$72 billion public debt cancellation.**

**Who:** Frontline service providers from SEIU Local 721, Local 99, USWW and UHW

**What:** 'Remember Puerto Rico!' Funeral Procession and 14-Minute Die-In

**When:** Wednesday, October 4, 2017 at 11:30 a.m.

**Where:** Edward R. Roybal Federal Building, 255 E. Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012

**Visuals:** Visuals will include a funeral procession with coffins bearing Puerto Rican flags and a 14-minute die-in, where participants will be draped in Puerto Rican flags as they hold aloft signs detailing the human and economic devastation inflicted by Hurricane Maria and exacerbated by the staggering ineptness of the Trump Administration.

The funeral procession and 14-minute die-in being held in downtown Los Angeles in front of the Roybal Federal Building will be part of series of nationwide demonstrations to redirect awareness to Puerto Rico's shocking plight caused by Hurricane Maria – a Category 5 storm that engulfed virtually the entire island approximately two weeks ago – and to take President Donald Trump to task both for his Administration's inexcusably slow response to the disaster as well as his disgraceful personal insults to Puerto Rico's victims and local leaders. **Each minute of the 14-minute die-in will represent the number of days that Americans living in Puerto Rico have survived without potable water, electricity and other basic necessities.**

Puerto Ricans were already weathering the twin financial storms of a lingering economic recession and a stifling \$72 billion public debt. These compounded conditions left the fragile island vulnerable to a natural disaster like Hurricane Maria – and they are hindering Puerto Rico's ability to recover and rebuild. **Activists will highlight the latest example of shameless immorality exemplified by big banks – which coldly insist that Puerto Ricans prioritize debt payments ahead of saving the lives of their family members, their loved ones, their neighbors and themselves.** Even as Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico – and throughout the recovery process – big banks have been relentlessly pushing in court to make sure they get paid. On October 4, 2017, one of these federal court hearings will take place in New York (moved from storm-stricken San Juan, Puerto Rico). Funeral procession and die-in participants in Los Angeles – along with demonstrators nationwide – will call on Judge Laura Taylor Swain to take the following actions:

- ✓ Place a moratorium on Puerto Rico's debt payments until the island's economy recovers.
- ✓ Restructure Puerto Rico's debt in bankruptcy court and not in a piecemeal fashion in order to ensure that the debt is settled fairly and not solely in the interest of bondholders.
- ✓ Continue to fully fund Puerto Rico's Independent Audit Commission so that everyone may understand exactly what past actions caused the debt to reach its current level; whether any of those decisions were illegal; and, thus, whether any debt payment mandates are invalid and unenforceable.

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