

FOR MEDIA PLANNING: Monday, June 28, 2021 at 9 AM

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AS LA COUNTY PREPARES TO ADOPT BUDGET WITH ZERO MEANINGFUL INVESTMENT IN FRONTLINE WORKERS, COUNTY'S ESSENTIAL WORKER HEROES TO CONFRONT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS FOR FAILING WORKFORCE THROUGHOUT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SEIU 721 Members to Demand Accountability for Supervisors' Blatant Disregard and Disrespect Beginning with Lack of Access to PPE Plus Telework Equipment and Culminating in 'Slap in the Face' Refusal to Provide Heroes Pay for All and Proposed 0% Cost of Living Adjustment

LOS ANGELES — The workforce that put their lives on the line to keep Los Angeles County functional throughout the entire COVID-19 pandemic will hold a press conference Monday to demand answers from the Board of Supervisors for their inadequate response to the COVID-19 pandemic – including lack of protective and telework equipment for the county's frontline employees as well as paltry compensation being offered to a workforce that, just months ago, elected officials and top county managers hailed as "heroes."

Essential workers will deliver thousands of cards with one-word statements to the Board of Supervisors. Each card will spell out how respective employees in the county's workforce feel about the treatment they've endured, as they put their lives on the line and paid tremendous sacrifices so that the county's more than ten million residents could stay safe during the deadliest pandemic in a century.

Los Angeles County officials are set to adopt a budget with no meaningful investment in frontline worker heroes, despite the influx of more than \$1.9 billion in federal funds. The funds were awarded to the county through the American Rescue Plan and CARES Act, legislation that passed with the help of large-scale mobilization by SEIU members in Los Angeles County and across the country.

The press conference comes as hundreds of SEIU 721 members continue organizing protests throughout LA County at the field offices of the five County Supervisors.

WHO: LA County's essential workers from SEIU 721 – including Registered Nurses, Medical Case Workers, Mental Health Counselors, Public Health Professionals, Disaster Service Workers/Parks & Recreation Staff, Social Workers and More

WHAT: Press Conference: LA County Heroes to Confront Board of Supervisors

WHEN: Monday, June 28, 2021 at 9 AM

WHERE: Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
(Steps of Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room Entrance)
500 W. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

* News van parking along Temple St. between Hill St. and Grand Ave.

VISUALS: Giant pop-up banners displaying one-word cards, banners and placards with pro-worker messages.

BACKGROUND: When the novel coronavirus struck the US and prompted California Governor Gavin Newsom to institute a statewide lockdown, LA County's frontline essential workers were instrumental in keeping vital services running and rightly regarded as "heroes." It was their hard work and sacrifices that kept the county's entire hospital and clinic network open – from the Registered Nurses and LVNs who handled direct patient care to the hospital support staff whose behind-the-scenes labor comprised the unseen backbone of the entire operation.

And it was frontline workers' dedication to LA County's mission that kept the county's massive infrastructure working. Roads remained passable for at-home deliveries. Sanitation services functioned without interruption. Parks and open space were available to a public eager to exit the confines of lockdown while remaining socially distant. Social workers found creative ways to keep children safe while keeping the pandemic from spreading while visiting homes and facilities. Social services staff were the safety net for the most vulnerable among us – the unemployed, the elderly, the infirm, the illiterate, the destitute. Mental health outreach professionals connected the homeless and those on the margins with the resources needed to survive during one of the scariest, most uncertain chapters in our nation's recent history. And clerical staff ensured that marriage licenses got issued and property assessments continued – all while providing the personnel necessary to ensure successful widespread participation in what historians are bound to regard as a pivotal Presidential election.

The essential workforce of LA County did their duty even as top county managers and elected officials dragged their feet for months when it came to providing proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at almost every level. The essential workforce of LA County did their duty even when top county managers and elected officials inexplicably delayed supplying critical telework equipment, ultimately forcing middle management to display *de facto* favoritism toward employees with laptops and other computer equipment while endangering employees who lacked such amenities. The essential workforce of LA County did their duty even when colleagues contracted COVID-19, with some paying the ultimate price.

While the COVID-19 pandemic raged, top county managers and elected officials rightfully declared the county's frontline workers to be "heroes" and promised that "We're all in this together." But their gratitude has evaporated almost overnight now that lockdown rules have been lifted and vaccination rates have been rising. LA County's leaders are going "back to normal" – which, for them, means taking the county's essential frontline workforce completely for granted. That attitude will come to an abrupt end at next week's press conference, when members of that same workforce being treated with outright disrespect remind the Board of Supervisors whose labor LA County's nearly 11 million residents truly cannot live without.

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