



209 Golden Gate Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94102
 Tel: 415-864-8770 | Fax: 415-864-4158 | www.unitehere2.org



Press Release: For Immediate Release on November 20, 2009

Contact: Ian Lewis (Unite Here! Local 2): 415-608-3875 or ilewis@unitehere2.org

For What It's Worth

(November 20, 2009, San Francisco) - In a press statement yesterday, the San Francisco Hotel Council called on Unite Here Local 2 to “focus on talks at the negotiation table.” The statement contained several inaccurate and misleading statements that betray the Council’s growing irrelevance to major decisions affecting San Francisco’s hotel industry.

Among the assertions made by the Hotel Council was the statement that “the 3-day strikes orchestrated by Local 2 have not significantly impacted hotel operations.” This claim is contradicted by the fact that food service operations were shut down entirely as a result of strikes, and that some guests reported having to clean their own rooms. The Grand Hyatt issued a message to guests on November 5 stating that “Normal housekeeping service will not be provided... the Grand Views restaurant on the 36th floor will not be open today... In-room dining will not be available.”

The Hotel Council also asserted that “the average hotel housekeeper makes \$60,000 in salary and benefits.” Nonetheless, actual hotel payroll data shows that the average housekeeper in fact earn \$31,024 per year. With benefit costs (payments that go to benefit funds jointly administered by the union and management), this total amounts to \$50,824.

These basic errors evidence the Hotel Council’s lack of familiarity with, and relevance to, today’s hotel industry. They parallel the Hotel Council’s marginal role in the 2004-06 labor dispute (during which the organization issued a public letter to the mayor titled “Whose Mayor Are You, Mayor Newsom?”).

In negotiations with companies such as Hyatt, Starwood, InterContinental, and Hilton, local managers have had little if any authority to resolve the major issues in contention. Instead, decision making has been centralized by corporate executives of those companies. As a result of this trend, San Francisco’s largest hotel companies suffer from a profound lack of institutional memory. At a recent meeting convened by the Mayor – a meeting to which the Hotel Council was not invited – only one out of thirteen industry representatives had been present at a similar meeting held just five years ago during the Fall hotel lockout.

Unite Here! Local 2 is the union of hotel and food service workers in San Francisco and San Mateo Counties. It represents about 12,000 workers in the hospitality industry. For more information, visit www.unitehere2.org.