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SEIU Local 2 janitors in Toronto agree to new deal, win their largest increases ever

TORONTO – SEIU Local 2 janitors in Toronto celebrated May Day after agreeing to a new deal on the weekend that will see wages increase by 6.4% in the first year of their new agreement – a \$1 per hour increase. Over the life of the three-year deal, those currently making \$15.70 per hour will go up to \$18.30, a 16.6% increase, and the cleaners making \$16.45 per hour will go up to \$19.05, a 15.8% increase. They are the largest increases the janitors have ever won.

“I am happy with the deal,” said Renzo Garcia, who has been working with J&A Cleaning Solutions in Toronto for the past four years. “It’s a great victory and well deserved.”

Saturday’s scheduled strike vote in downtown Toronto turned into a ratification vote after the employers presented a new offer on Friday. The janitors had repeatedly said they were willing to strike if the companies they work for did not provide wage increases that kept up with the cost of living. Their collective bargaining agreement had expired at the end of March.

“Never be afraid to raise your voice against injustice and greed,” said Garcia. “The deal leaves us feeling more optimistic and will help my co-workers to be less stressed during this time of inflation.”

Janitors also won “wage protection” language that could increase what the janitors earn should the minimum wage increase. They won improvements in various other areas including their pension plan and dental plan. Job security was enhanced through protections against subcontracting, and an additional paid personal day for workers with at least five years of service.

The new agreement sets the standard for industry negotiations in the city. SEIU Local 2 represents over 4,000 cleaners in the Greater Toronto Area. More than 2,500 of them work for companies that were negotiating at a central table with the Union – they now have a deal. The remaining 1,500 plus workers are employed by companies with “site/building-specific” agreements with the Union (versus *city-wide**)

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and will be negotiating new contracts in the coming weeks. At a minimum, they will be expected to agree to the same improvements for their employees.

* *City-wide* refers to Collective Bargaining Agreements where employers recognize SEIU Local 2 as the exclusive bargaining agent for all janitorial employees of the employer in the city of Toronto, except for supervisors and any employees for whom another trade union already held bargaining rights.

www.JusticeforJanitors.ca

SEIU Local 2 represents over 18,000 essential workers in Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Alberta. We are proud members of the largest, fastest growing, and most dynamic union in North America.

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