



MEDIA RELEASE

April 12, 2012

City Council speaks up for cleaners, votes to review contracting out of cleaning services

Toronto, ON – The Justice & Dignity for Cleaners campaign won an important victory at City Hall yesterday when Council voted 29-12 to prevent City Manager from awarding contracts for cleaning service without Council approval.

The decision affirms Council authority over reviewing and extending the cleaning contract for police stations already awarded to Impact Cleaning by City Management in February this year. Impact Cleaning is the same company that was previously found in violation of the City's Fair Wage Policy and underpaying vulnerable workers, including undocumented workers.

For months, hundreds of City of Toronto cleaners have been facing the threat of job loss as they began to receive notice that cleaning in City Facilities would be contracted out. For cleaners in the public and private sectors, it makes a difference to see City Council come to terms with the reality of contract cleaning, which includes routine exploitation of vulnerable workers and layers of subcontracting that help cleaning companies evade their obligations as employers.

“Newcomers and immigrants are the most vulnerable people in this city. It's not only about money, it's making sure that the companies we are dealing with respect their employees,” said Councillor Ana Bailao during the Council meeting. Bailao formerly worked as a cleaner when she was a newcomer and said she was well aware of the industry's practices.

City of Toronto cleaners make roughly \$40,000 a year with benefits, and many Councillors argued that cleaners deserved a decent wage for the difficult work they do. As a contrast, cleaners working for private contractors usually make close to minimum wage and struggle with multiple jobs to support their families.

“We welcome this decision from City Council because it was the right thing to do. We have been asking the City to lead by example, as a good employer, and we are happy that our Councillors agree,” said Winnie Ng, co-chair of Good Jobs for All. Ng and others launched the Justice and Dignity for Cleaners campaign in September 2011, asking Councillors to vote on proposed job cuts instead of having City managers make backroom decisions.

-30-

For further information:
Preethy Sivakumar – 416 937 9378
Coordinator, Good Jobs for All