

May 27, 2008

Dear Community Leader,

We are writing to ask you to join former President Bill Clinton and Speaker Emeritus of the California Assembly Fabian Núñez in standing with the 20,000 patient care and service workers at the University of California in their efforts to make improvements for patients, students and their families.

These UC workers, who do everything from assisting in surgery at the 5-hospital to cleaning campus dorms at the 10-campus, overwhelmingly authorized a strike vote, approximately 97% in both units, last week.

Workers notified UC executives that a strike will take place on June 4th and June 5th. However, the workers, who have been negotiating in good faith since August of last year, still hold hope that a strike can be averted.

Workers take great pride in contributing to UC and are concerned that its world-renowned reputation may be at risk. Medical centers are losing experienced patient care staff to other hospitals where pay is dramatically higher, and UC service workers make poverty wages as low as \$10 per hour. Other CA hospitals and community colleges pay average of 25% more than UC.

96% of UC service workers are income eligible for public assistance programs including: food stamps, WIC, public housing subsidies, and reduced lunch.

A month ago, independent state appointed fact finder Carol Vendrillo agreed that UC executives could meet workers contract demands.

“It is not the lack of state funding but the University’s priorities that leaves the service workers’ wages at the bottom of the list...U.C. has demonstrated the ability to increase compensation when it fits with certain priorities without any demonstrable link to a state funding source.”

We are asking you to stand with these workers, students, and our community. **Former President Bill Clinton and and Speaker Emeritus Núñez, scheduled to speak at UC Graduations at UCLA and UC Davis, have committed not to speak at any UC Campus unless a fair contract settlement is reached.** We are asking you to join them in not lending your credibility to the University or any UC Campus until this important issue is resolved.

Please contact Max Alper at 510-529-5552 as soon as possible so that we can discuss how you can help ensure that UC executives fulfill the University’s strong public mission by financially prioritizing retention of patient care staff and bringing service workers’ families out of poverty.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lakesha Harrison". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned centrally below the "In Solidarity," text.

Lakesha Harrison, LVN
President, AFSCME 3299