



*Clergy & Laity United  
For Economic Justice*

CLUE Justice  
464 Lucas Ave #202  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

This letter has been updated to reflect that, as of Jan 8, the Fairmont Miramar signed a tentative agreement with UNITE HERE Local 11 and addressed the concerns previously outlined in the truth commission report pertaining to that hotel.

Nov 29, 2023

Mayor Gleam Davis  
Councilmember Phil Brock  
Councilmember Christine Parra  
Mayor Pro Tem Lana Negrete  
Councilmember Jesse Zwick  
Councilmember Caroline Torosis  
Councilmember Oscar de la Torre  
City Manager David White  
City Attorney Douglas T. Sloan  
City of Santa Monica  
1685 Main St.  
Santa Monica, CA 90401

Dear Mayor Gleam Davis, Councilmembers of Santa Monica, City Manager David White, and City Attorney Douglas T. Sloan,

On November 16, trusted Santa Monica faith leaders, community members, and local elected leaders gathered to hear worker and migrant testimonies about violence against workers and the exploitation of unhoused migrant workers in Santa Monica hotels. We as Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice (CLUE) of Santa Monica hosted the hearing, and those gathered included:

- Mike Bonin, former Los Angeles City Councilmember
- Rev. Nate Rugh, Rector of St. Augustine by-the-Sea Church Santa Monica
- Rev. Mike Kinman, Rector of All Saints Episcopal Church Pasadena
- Neil Comess-Daniels, Rabbi Emeritus at Beth Shir Shalom Santa Monica
- Delis Alejandro, Pastoral Associate of St. Monica's Catholic Church
- Anjuli Kronheim, Organizing Director of Bend the Arc Jewish Action
- Sam Cozolino, Vice Chair of the Political Action Committee of the Santa Monica Democratic Club
- Luis Castañon, Santa Monica Human Services Commissioner
- Ana Grande, Executive Director of the Program for Torture Victims
- Sister Judy Vaughan, Executive Director & Founder of Alexandria House
- Vivian Rothstein, CLUE Santa Monica Committee & Board Member

- Saba Waheed, Director of the UCLA Labor Center
- Rabbi Robin Podolsky

Workers' testimonies revolved primarily around violence they experienced on the picket line; company retaliation against workers in leadership roles within the union; and exploitative migrant labor at struck hotels.

Two workers from Santa Monica hotels, Le Meridien Delfina and the Viceroy, shared that after years of service at their workplaces, they were, respectively, suspended and terminated from their positions under vague allegations of misconduct. Both workers have strong leadership roles in their union and now face severe economic insecurity.

In a scandal that is being currently investigated by the offices of Los Angeles District Attorney, George Gascon and California Labor Commissioner Lilia Garcia-Brower, Le Meridien Delfina also brought in unhoused migrants to replace striking workers at their property. One such subcontracted refugee worker shared in his testimony that, due to staff shortages, he did the work of three or four people, without being told of his right to ten-minute breaks.

Over decades, Santa Monica has led the nation to pass legislation to protect workers for moments like these, when wealthy hospitality companies take advantage of the most vulnerable workers. We urge the City of Santa Monica to do the following:

- Demand an end to retaliation against striking workers.
- Investigate whether these migrants brought in as replacement workers during strikes at the Le Meridien Delfina have received the applicable minimum wages per the city's local ordinance; whether they have been provided personal security devices, and proper training on the use of such devices, in addition to training on other rights intended to protect workers from threatening conduct as required by the hotel worker protection ordinance.
- These examples brought forth by the workers also highlight a fundamental problem of labor enforcement in the hospitality industry: how workers or enforcement agencies can regulate the many shadowy staffing agencies that pay the checks of employees, a problem that persists even at wealthy large corporations with professional human resources departments. To this end, we also urge the city to gather information about each staffing agency utilized by the hotels named in this letter, and to collect basic information about each company, the firms with which they work, and the employees employed by each firm.

As Saba Waheed of the UCLA Labor Center stated after hearing worker testimonies, "Over the decades, Santa Monica has led the nation to pass policies to protect workers for exactly moments like this. Let's amplify the strength of the city and its laws and protect the most vulnerable workers."

Former LA City Councilmember, Mike Bonin, condemned the hotel companies for "doing this in the spotlight with the cameras on," and called for the Santa Monica community to "insist on enforcement" of existing worker protection laws.

Ana Grande, Executive Director of the Program for Torture Victims, also called on the city “to bear witness to the atrocities committed against hotel workers in Santa Monica. Physical and emotional harassment has led to anxiety, depression, and PTSD for many. It is inconceivable that such actions have taken place in a country that values freedom and in a progressive city like Santa Monica.”

CLUE Board Member, Vivan Rothstein, reiterated hotel workers’ contribution to Santa Monica’s economy and reminded the community that “Santa Monica prides itself on being progressive, and the city as a whole needs to know about this [violence].”

Santa Monica has fought for workers’ rights and safety, and these rights must now be upheld. We call upon the city to protect workers by enforcing the policies Santa Monicans have fought hard to win.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jennifer Gutierrez, Executive Director CLUE