



UNITE HERE LOCAL 40

UNITE HERE Local 40
#1812-1177 Hastings St. W.
Vancouver BC V6E 2K3
Website: www.uniteherelocal40.org
Email: updates@local40union.com

February 24, 2021

Dear Councillor,

My name is Irmak Bahar and I'm an organizer at UNITE HERE Local 40. I'm writing to urge you to stand with hotel workers in the fight to extend their recall rights.

When the pandemic first hit in March 2020, approximately 50,000 hotel workers in British Columbia were laid off. The majority of them have not been called back to work. These layoffs affect long-term workers, most of them women and people of colour, who are disproportionately impacted by the economic repercussions of the pandemic. The "she-cession" hit women first and hardest with greater job losses and underemployment in sectors like hospitality. Over 60% of workers in the hotel industry are women – many of them immigrants, visible minorities and Indigenous. The economic impact of COVID-19 on hotel workers, particularly women, is turning back the clock to an earlier era.

The BC government has given the tourism industry a \$105 million bailout and these funds are not contingent on worker retention. The lack of recall protections for workers has led to mass firings and extortionary tactics on the part of employers who want to strip away years of gains made by workers. Many hotels are refusing to extend workers' right to return to their jobs despite the looming rollout of the vaccine and forecasts suggesting the hotel industry could begin to rebound in Fall 2021. Instead, they are using the pandemic as a cover to fire women, including Hilton Metrotown, Pacific Gateway, Pan Pacific, Shangri La, Parq Hotel, Fairmont and Coast Hotels. Hundreds of workers have been permanently terminated since December; hotels have made clear their plans to continue to eliminate much of their staff, including women who have been working there for decades.

This is an opportunistic attack on the livelihoods of hotel workers. The hotel industry's refusal to bring women back to their jobs threatens the work conditions and quality of life of racialized women across British Columbia. Women who clean, cater to and care for BC tourists are leading the fight to save hotel jobs from an industry intent on using a pandemic to slash and burn them. Laid-off and fired women in BC's hotel industry are



UNITE HERE LOCAL 40

UNITE HERE Local 40
#1812-1177 Hastings St. W.
Vancouver BC V6E 2K3
Website: www.uniteherelocal40.org
Email: updates@local40union.com

standing up to fight for their jobs and say 'No' to the hotel industry's pandemic profiteering. We refuse to allow hotel workers to become collateral damage in the aftermath of covid-19 and we invite you to join us in our fight for gender equality and racial justice.

Regards,
Irmak Bahar