



'Banquet in the streets' outside Hilton LAX marks second anniversary of hotel boycott

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Marking the two-year anniversary of a call to boycott the Hilton Los Angeles Airport, hundreds of hotel workers, former clients, community leaders and elected officials held a "banquet in the streets" October 2nd outside the hotel on Century Boulevard.

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX)-area hotel workers and the Unite Here Local 11 union first called for a boycott of the Hilton LAX two years ago to push for improved working conditions. The boycott has since cost the hotel, which is at the focus of a labor dispute, about \$7 million in lost revenue, according to the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy.

The "banquet in the streets" came just days after a federal court judge dismissed a lawsuit by the Hilton LAX contesting the constitutionality of the city's living wage law for Century Boulevard hotel workers. The ruling allows the ordinance, which covers approximately 3,500 workers in 13 hotels near LAX, to remain in effect.

The Hilton LAX has reportedly spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to oppose a living wage law for hotel

workers near LAX, according to the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy. The hotel has been charged with more than a dozen alleged labor law violations, alliance officials note.

Hotel management was unavailable for comment before Argonaut press time, but it has rejected any claims of alleged mistreatment of the workers and has argued that the boycott call is part of the union's effort to organize the workers.

In October last year, Cal/ OSHA (California Department of Industrial Relations Division of Occupational Safety and Health) cited Hilton LAX after finding the company allegedly violated California regulations that require hotels to protect housekeepers from exposure to the causes of certain injuries. The citations were the first that Cal/ OSHA has ever issued against an employer in the hotel industry alleging such violations.

"Many of the parents and guardians of our students work in the hotel industry and rely on better working conditions for themselves and their families," David Sanchez, president of the California Teachers Association, said at the

banquet event. "We are outside of the Hilton LAX today to send the message that we will continue to honor the boycott until these workers are treated fairly."

The California Teachers Association is one of over 30 groups — including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Muslim American Society, the Los Angeles Urban League and the California Black Chamber of Commerce — that have canceled events at the hotel, alliance officials said. Dozens of elected officials, including Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas, Assemblyman Curren Price and City Councilmembers Bill Rosendahl and Janice Hahn, have refused to attend events at the hotels until the labor dispute is resolved, according to the alliance.