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Big Box Living Wage Ordinance Passes City Council

Wednesday, July 26, 2006

The Big Box Living Wage Ordinance passed the Chicago City Council by a vote of 35-14.

Statement from CFL President Dennis Gannon on the passage of the Big Box Living Wage Ordinance

“This afternoon, the Chicago City Council took the historic step of passing the Big Box Living Wage Ordinance requiring large, profitable retailers with stores larger than 90,000 and generating at least \$1 billion in annual sales to pay a living wage of \$10 per hour and \$3 in benefits to their employees.

The passage of this ordinance is a victory for all the communities and working men and women in Chicago who deserve to earn a living wage and benefits in exchange for their hard work. It sets a national standard for making sure individuals earn a living wage with benefits in exchange for day’s work.

At the heart of this ordinance is equality and fairness. Today’s vote sends a message that our elected officials and community members alike are not interested in the creation of low paying jobs that fail to provide a living wage or adequate health care benefits for working families. The choice between no job and a low-paying job is a choice between bad and worse.

Only when families can afford to make ends meet and afford quality health care will we see real improvement in our communities. Corporations that can well afford to pay a living wage, should be held to a higher standard.

We have witnessed overwhelming dedication from grassroots community organizations, religious groups, the labor community, elected officials and a majority of Chicagoans who want to raise the standard of living in our communities through the creation of good jobs.

Thanks to the tireless work of our affiliated local unions—especially UFCW, SEIU, UNITE HERE and Teamsters—and countless community organizations—the Grassroots Collaborative, ACORN, Jobs with Justice, Citizen Action, the Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, Metro Seniors in Action, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, and many others—the rights of lower and middle class workers have ascended once again into the public discourse.

I also applaud the aldermen who acted on behalf of the interests of the people on this vote. These men and women took to heart the issue of equality and living wage and did the right thing by voting to pass the ordinance.”