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SEIU pledges “people power” to Garcia campaign in Chicago

By Roberta Wood

One of Chicago's most influential labor groups took a stand Sunday in support of the candidacy of Jesus Garcia, the Cook County commissioner who is challenging Mayor Rahm Emanuel's bid for a second term.

Charging that Emanuel has eliminated many good jobs and outsourced others to companies that slash wages, SEIU Local 1 President Tom Balanoff pledged the support of the union's Illinois State Council which represents 150,000 janitors, home care and child care providers, security guards, public employees, and social service workers.

The endorsement is expected to bring both financial and “people power” resources to the challenger's campaign. With tens of thousands of Chicago members, SEIU has a seasoned activist corps whose purple shirts stand out on the city's picket lines, at immigrant right protests, low wage worker campaigns and impressive get-out-the vote activities.

“While our rank and file members can't match the tens of millions of dollars that Emanuel's friends are funneling into his campaign, our volunteerism and our votes can make a real difference,” Balanoff pledged.

The union's State Council had declined to make an endorsement before the first round of



voting, Feb. 24. At that time, many observers expected the incumbent mayor, fortified with a \$30 million campaign fund, to sail to victory without a run-off. But Garcia's unexpectedly strong outcome - 34% - seems to have encouraged SEIU to throw its lot in with other major Chicago unions, including the 30,000-member Chicago Federation of Teachers, the two ATU locals representing the city's bus and train operators, 10,000-member Teamsters Local 743, Steelworkers, UE and Work-

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ers United.

Balanoff told the Chicago Sun Times, “Among membership, there was never support to endorse Rahm.” During Emanuel's first year in office, 400 union janitors lost their jobs at O'Hare Airport when his administration switched the window-

Our volunteerism and our votes can make a real difference.

washing contract to a non-union company.

But union endorsements have not been a slam dunk for Garcia, the progressive candidate. In a city with a long history of patronage, many labor leaders find themselves between a rock and a hard place; their members' welfare seems to depend on the benevolence of an administration with the power to cut jobs, health care, and pensions, contract out union work, withhold new construction projects, and, as any boss can do, make life miserable for the work force.

Nevertheless, for the first time in Chicago electoral history, the Chicago Federation of Labor declined to endorse an incumbent in this year's mayoral race despite a strong push in that direction from the city's building trades. The Building Trades represent construction workers not only in the city's workforce, but also in skilled trades in what is materializing this Spring as a long-hoped-for construction boom.

SEIU's support comes as the latest in a string of endorsement gains for Garcia this week. Last Sunday, West-Side Congressman Danny Davis endorsed Garcia. On Monday a group of South Side

African American ministers brought together by Rev. Jesse Jackson lent their support. Citing 50 closed schools and neighborhoods replete with vacant lots but no grocery stores, Jackson said, "We are tired of this," then added, "Chuy has the consistent track record of service to become mayor of Chicago." On Thursday, Willie Wilson, who came in third after Garcia with 10 percent of the Feb. 24 vote total, declared, "Chuy Garcia is the only candidate in this race we can trust to put the needs of Chicago communities first."



Roberta Wood is treasurer of the CPUSA.

Senate stalling on Lynch nomination is "unconscionable"

By PW Editorial

For 130 days now the Republican-dominated Senate has held up the confirmation of Loretta Lynch as U.S. Attorney General. Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell had promised to bring the nomination to a vote over a month ago. Notwithstanding impeccable credentials and reputation, President Obama's nominee to replace the outgoing Eric Holder has barely the 50 votes needed to allow a tie-breaking vote by Vice President Joe Biden.

A new twist to this sad story of Republican blockage was added by the GOP demand that a separate bill to prevent human trafficking be brought to the Senate floor first. Democrats balked at supporting the legislation after discovering hidden anti-abortion language in the bill.

Race and politics are undeniably additional factors. Republicans don't like Lynch's judicial outlook in general and her support of Obama's executive order on immigration in particular. That the former Brooklyn DA would become the first black woman to hold the position as the national

top law enforcement officer is another big reason.

The chairman of the Black Congressional Caucus Rep. G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., said it plainly: "I think race certainly can be considered a major factor in the delay."

The White House has called the stalling "unconscionable."

Prospective Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton weighed in with a tweet calling the spectacle a Congressional trifecta: "1) Blocking great nominee, 1st African American woman AG, for longer than any AG in 30 years" Clinton's first tweet read, followed by "2) Playing politics with trafficking victims....3) Threatening women's health & rights."

They are all correct. The GOP is playing a cruel and twisted game. Whether they will be held accountable will depend how an informed electorate responds.

We urge our readers to make your outrage at the GOP delay known. Action will speak much louder than words.

Race, gender and politics are undeniably factors in the stalling of the nomination of Lynch.

Workers getting burned by McDonald's greed



By Mark Kuhlenbeck

The non-profit Fight for \$15 organization has revealed some disturbing information entitled “Burned at McDonald’s. Treated with MUSTARD” on March 16, 2015, which reports that, “Four out of five fast food workers have been burned” while on the job.

According to the Burn Foundation in Philadelphia, “The Food Service Industry experiences the highest number of burns of any employment sector, about 12,000 each year. Cooks, food handlers, kitchen workers, and wait staff are all listed among the top 50 occupations at risk for on-the-job burn injury.” One such employee, Brittney Berry of Chicago, told The Huffington Post that she slipped and caught her arm on the grill, causing nerve damage. “My managers kept pushing me to work faster. The managers told me to put mustard on it, but I ended up having to get rushed to the hospital in an ambulance.”

The Kessler Burn & Trauma Center, located at the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York, advises burn victims not to treat their injuries with “butter, grease, creams, sprays, burn ointments, or powders.”

Other allegations criticize the lack of medical supplies and First Aid materials available in store locations. One-third of fast food workers reported last year that their restaurant had “empty or poorly equipped” First Aid kits.

McDonald’s was once the most profitable corporation in the fast food industry. Now, thanks to groups like Fight for \$15, the company has come under scrutiny for its highly questionable business practices and lack of concern for workers.

A recent report issued by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Adding inequality to injury: The costs of failing to protect workers on the job, concludes in its executive summary:

“The failure of many employers to prevent millions of work injuries and illnesses each year, and the failure of the broken workers’ compensation system to ensure that workers do not bear the costs of their injuries and illnesses, are truly adding inequality to injury.”

The Fight for \$15 campaign, with the help of the Service Employees International Union, has been working for the last two years to help organize fast food workers to fight for better working conditions.

The alleged systematic abuse by companies like McDonald’s, KFC, Taco Bell and other fast food chains has not gone unnoticed in recent years. In the last two years, national fast food strikes have erupted across the country from coast to coast, drawing thousands into the street demanding respectful treatment as human beings.

Fast food companies care way more about their profits than the basic safety of their workers.

Terry Pratchett, fantasy author dies at 66

By Blake Deppe

Fantasy novelist Terry Pratchett died, leaving several library shelves' worth of published literature behind, as well as the legacy those books created.

A short piece by PJSM Prints noted, "Terry passed away in his home, with his cat sleeping on his bed, surrounded by his family. Diagnosed with PCA (posterior cortical atrophy - a rare form of Alzheimer's disease) in 2007, he battled the disease with his trademark determination and creativity, and continued to write. He completed his last book, a new Discworld novel, in the summer of 2014, before succumbing to the final stages of the disease."

Though Pratchett wrote more than 70 books, he is most commonly associated with his Discworld series, which played with and poked fun at common fantasy tropes and conventions while offering a unique and intriguing narrative of its own. The books also commented on serious issues with analogies to the Gulf War, trade unions (interestingly, there's something in this world that is essentially a magicians union), financial matters, university politics, religion, and philosophy. The novels also did not use chapters, as Pratchett's view of them was thus: "Life does not happen in regular chapters, nor do movies, and Homer did not write in chapters. I'm blessed if I know what function they serve in books for adults."

Pratchett was a lifelong defender of the fantasy genre, in which he worked rather exclusively, and which he, as so many of his peers, felt did not get the credit or respect it deserved.

Los venezolanos ve infundadas amenazas de EE.UU.

TeleSur

Una encuesta de Hinterlaces, difundida en el programa venezolano José Vicente Hoy, reveló que la mayoría de los ciudadanos no está de acuerdo con la injerencia de EE.UU.

en su país y rechazan una intervención militar del gobierno norteamericano, del cual tienen una opinión ampliamente desfavorable.

El 86 por ciento de los venezolanos opina que Estados Unidos (EE.UU.) no tiene motivos para considerar a Venezuela una amenaza para su seguridad nacional, que contrasta con el 11 por ciento que opinó que la nación norteamericana sí los tiene, según un estudio de la encuestadora Hinterlaces.

El estudio destacó que el 94 por ciento de los encuestados dijo estar en desacuerdo con que el Gobierno de EE.UU. emprenda acciones militares en Venezuela para derrocar al presidente Nicolás Maduro. Apenas el 5 por ciento dijo estar de acuerdo.

Asimismo, el 58 por ciento está de acuerdo con la solicitud de la Ley Habilitante Antiimperialista hecha por el presidente de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro, para fortalecer la defensa de la paz y la soberanía del país suramericano. Injerencia de EE.UU.

En cuanto a la injerencia del gobierno estadounidense en los asuntos internos de Venezuela, el 81 por ciento de las personas manifestó no estar de acuerdo con la misma, al tiempo que 16 por ciento señaló estar de acuerdo.

En este sentido, el 60 por ciento tiene una opinión desfavorable del gobierno norteamericano y el 27 por ciento contestó favorable.

En cuanto a la actuación de la oposición venezolana frente a las amenazas de EE.UU., el 64 por ciento dijo que ésta debería respaldar las acciones del gobierno venezolano, mientras que un 27 por ciento dijo lo contrario.

Maduro agradece unidad antiimperialista de AL y el Mundo EN CONTEXTO El pasado miércoles el Gobierno venezolano activó 14 mil puntos en todas las plazas Bolívar de ese país, para la campaña denominada "¡Obama deroga el decreto ya!" y en inglés "Obama repeal the executive order".

La medida se tomó luego de que el pasado 9 de marzo, el presidente estadounidense, Barack Obama, anunció la implementación de nuevas sanciones contra Venezuela por supuestas violaciones de derechos humanos y declaró una situación de "emergencia nacional" por el "riesgo extraordinario" que supone la situación en ese país para la seguridad de EE.UU. Desde que EE.UU. emitió ese decreto, Venezuela ha recibido apoyo de decenas de gobiernos, ciudadanos y organizaciones alrededor del mundo.