RELEASE

Ottawa & District Labour Council – 500-280 Metcalfe St. – 613 233-7820
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For Immediate Release

Labour Council outraged by cold callous treatment of workers by Ottawa area employer during Pandemic

OTTAWA – The Ottawa and District Labour Council is expressing outrage at the Sheraton Ottawa Hotel decision this week to terminate approximately 75 employees, members of UNITE HERE Local 261. Many of the workers at the Sheraton are women and some have worked at the hotel for over 30 years.

"We understand that many people have lost jobs over the last year. We also understand the economic reality of the tourism industry along with other sectors in our city and elsewhere. What we do not understand is how any employer can be so heartless to those very workers who have brought decades of economic gain to the hotel," said Sean McKenny president of the Ottawa and District Labour Council, "especially during a global pandemic," he added.

The current agreement between UNITE HERE Local 261 and the Sheraton Ottawa Hotel contains a recall clause allowing the employees to return to work during the first 52 weeks of lay off. The Sheraton Ottawa Hotel is refusing to extend that recall provision effectively terminating the employment of those workers. UNITE HERE Local 261 has been meeting since October 2020 with the Sheraton in the hopes of coming to an agreement on the recall provision.

"This makes absolutely no sense," said the Labour Council president, "the cost to the Sheraton to extend the recall a further 52 weeks is zero dollars. There is no cost. Most of the other Ottawa area hotels had absolutely no problem with the recall extension," he added.

"Many of these workers are already suffering financial loses having been off work over the past year and now to take away from these workers any chance to return is just plain cold and callous," said McKenny.

In its support of UNITE HERE Local 261 the Labour Council will be calling on elected officials in the Ottawa area at a municipal, provincial, and federal level for support of the workers in addition to other actions being planned by the union and the Labour Council.

The Ottawa and District Labour Council (ODLC) has been the voice of working people in the Ottawa area since 1872. The ODLC currently represents 90 union locals with a combined membership of 50,000 workers and is the largest democratic and popular organization in the Ottawa area.

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