



SECURING OUR FUTURE

SECURITY OFFICERS STANDING UP FOR
GOOD JOBS AND A BETTER PHILADELPHIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PHILADELPHIA'S 3,000 SECURITY OFFICERS are coming together to join a union, 32BJ SEIU, to raise industry standards and to transform low-wage jobs into good jobs with decent pay and quality benefits. Creating good jobs in the city's security service industry could help stimulate the local economy by bringing millions of dollars over the next decade to security officers, their families, and their neighborhoods.

The private security industry is profitable and growing. Yet in Philadelphia, pay and benefits in the industry are paltry. Security officers in New York City and Washington, D.C. have successfully raised industry standards in their cities. The security officers of Philadelphia seek to do the same.

Private security officers in Philadelphia today:

- 79 percent of Philadelphia's security officers are African-American. The vast majority of the security workforce is in the age range most likely to be raising children and supporting households.
- Security officers are low paid. The median hourly wage for officers in Philadelphia is just \$10. Some officers report earning as little as \$8 an hour.
- Few officers have access to quality health care, sick days, or vacation days.

Working families and the Philadelphia economy today:

- Nearly a quarter of all residents in Philadelphia live in poverty. In some neighborhoods more than 40 percent of all residents live in poverty.
- Philadelphia's middle class continued to shrink over the last decade, while the number of low-income families grew by 13.5 percent between 2000 and 2010.
- The richest have seen big gains. By 2005, Pennsylvania's wealthiest 5 percent had average incomes that were 11 times greater than the poorest 20 percent, and their incomes grew seven times faster.

Raising pay such that security officers and their families no longer qualify for food stamps would mean \$140 million for Philadelphia's security officers and their families over the next decade, potentially generating upwards of \$230 million dollars in economic activity for the city of Philadelphia.

PROBLEM: LOW-WAGE JOBS IN SECURITY

THERE IS A PROBLEM in Philadelphia. Private security officers provide the essential service of keeping the city's people and property safe. Yet most work for low pay and receive few, if any, benefits. This puts families and our city's communities at risk.

The solution to this problem is simple: Security jobs must be good jobs. That is, they must pay a decent wage and include benefits and proper training. Philadelphia's 3,000 private security officers are forming a union with 32BJ SEIU to achieve precisely this end. Their goal – to raise standards in the industry – will strengthen Philadelphia's communities and enable thousands of families to make ends meet and provide their children with a brighter future.

THE PRIVATE SECURITY INDUSTRY

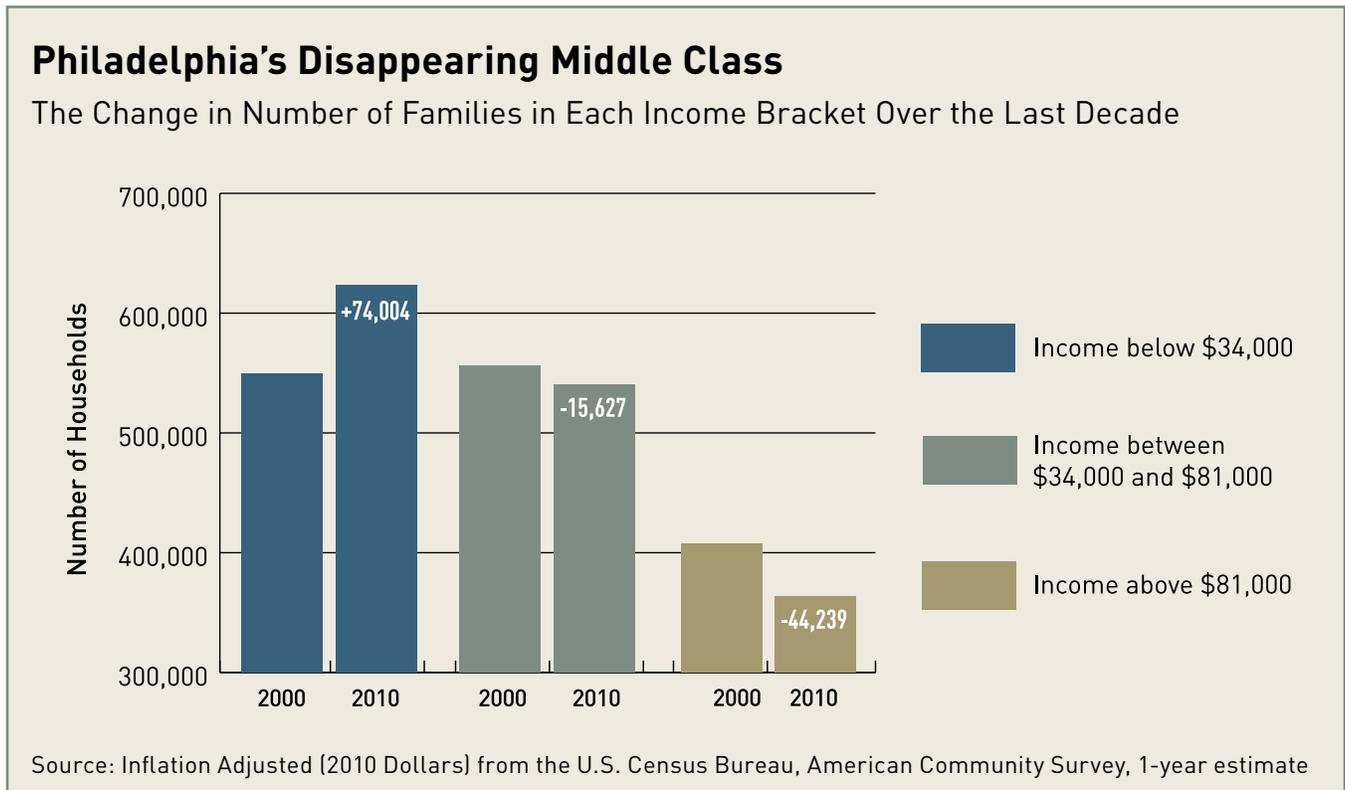
Private security is a growing industry nationwide. Private sector businesses, government bodies, universities, cultural and other institutions of all kinds contract with private security firms to provide usually unarmed

security officers who protect buildings, facilities, city residents and visitors. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that nationally the number of security jobs will grow by 18 percent by 2020, creating 200,200 new jobs.¹ Philadelphia's industry is part of this growth: the State Department of Labor and Industry predicts that the number of security officers employed in the city will grow by 12.4 percent by 2018.²

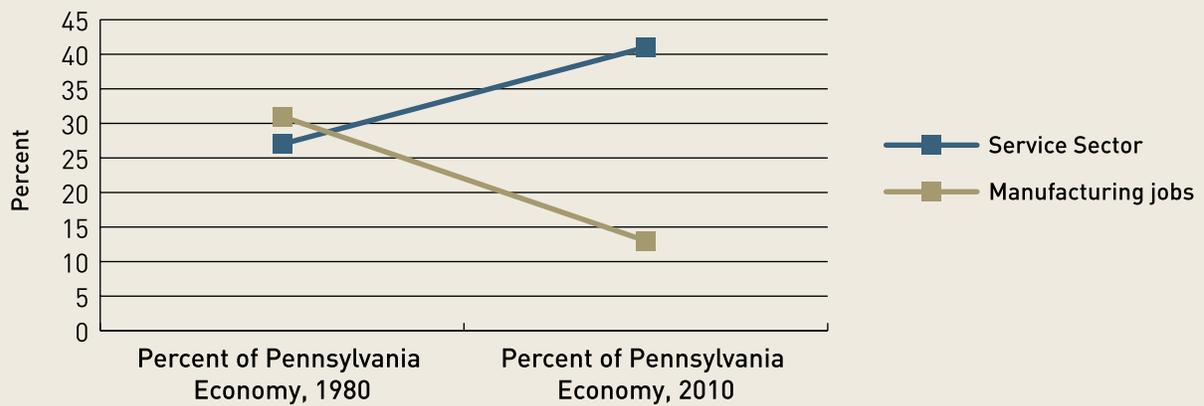
PHILADELPHIA'S EMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY LANDSCAPE

Philadelphia's working-class families have been struggling for decades. Even before the economic downturn, the city's residents faced high unemployment rates and shrinking incomes.³ In March 2012, unemployment in the city was 10.3 percent, compared with a 7.7 percent unemployment rate for all of Pennsylvania.⁴

According to U.S. Census data, the number of low-income families in Philadelphia grew by 13.5 percent over the last decade, while the middle class shrank.⁵ Today,



Pennsylvania's Transition to a Service Economy, 1980-2010



Source: Dēmos analysis of Current Population Survey data

nearly a quarter of all city residents live in poverty; in some neighborhoods, the poverty rate is more than 40 percent.⁶ According to the Food Research and Action Center, Philadelphia's First Congressional District is the second hungriest in the nation.⁷ The gap between the poorest and the wealthiest in Pennsylvania continues to grow. By 2005, Pennsylvania's 5 percent had average incomes that were 11 times greater than the poorest 20 percent, and their incomes grew seven times faster.⁸

PHILADELPHIA NEEDS GOOD JOBS

The solution to many of Philadelphia's problems is good jobs. While manufacturing jobs accounted for 31 percent

of employment in Pennsylvania in 1980, today they account for only 13 percent. Service sector jobs have taken hold, growing from 27 percent of employment in 1980 to 41 percent in 2010.⁹ In their stead, service jobs are now the primary employment option for Philadelphians without a college degree.¹⁰ For the most part, working-class service sector jobs are not good jobs: pay is low and benefits are minimal, if they exist at all. According to a report by Dēmos and the Keystone Research Center, the earnings of young Pennsylvania workers between the ages of 25 and 35 with a high school diploma decreased by 13 percent between 1980 and 2010.¹¹ Raising wages for high school graduates is critically important for Philadelphia's economy, as just 23.2 percent of Philadelphians have a bachelor's degree, well below the national average.¹²



"As security officers, we put our lives on the line every day. We are the first responders. We need to be respected as other professionals are."

– Melvin Moon

Philadelphia's working families are struggling to make ends meet. According to a Pew Charitable Trust report, almost half of the city's residents make less than \$35,000 annually.¹³ With service sector jobs increasingly dominating the employment landscape and security jobs on the rise, raising pay and benefit standards in the private security industry is vital for families and the larger effort of rebuilding Philadelphia's middle class.

PHILADELPHIA'S SECURITY OFFICERS

The vast majority of security officers in Philadelphia are African-Americans who live and work in the city. While African-Americans make up 42 percent of the city's population, making them the largest racial or ethnic group in the city, they are 79 percent of the private security workforce.¹⁴ According to Census data, 31 percent of African-Americans in Philadelphia lived in poverty in 2010 and their median income fell by 21 percent from 2000 to 2010.¹⁵

Philadelphia's security officers are generally between the ages of 25 and 54. This is the age group when workers are most likely to bear the responsibility for supporting a family and the age when workers reach their peak earnings.¹⁶ As the demographic data makes clear, work



"This is more than just a job. We really go out of our way to make sure folks are secure."

– Needum O'Bryant

The vast majority of security officers in Philadelphia are African-Americans who live and work in the city. While they make up 42 percent of the city's population, African-Americans are 79 percent of the private security workforce.

Philadelphia Workforce Demographics

	All Occupations*	Security Officers**
GENDER		
Female	51%	46%
Male	49%	54%
AGE		
Median	41 yrs	35 yrs
16-24	12%	23%
25-54	69%	59%
55 or Older	19%	18%
RACE		
Asian	4%	0.5%
Black	39%	79%
Caucasian	48%	14%
Hispanic	6%	6%
Other Races	3%	0.5%

* Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010, 1-year estimate

** Source: Catalyst Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia 2012

alone is not enough to bring people out of poverty. It is the quality of the job in terms of pay and benefits that is essential to ending poverty.

THE PRIVATE SECURITY INDUSTRY: LOW PAY, FEW BENEFITS

The pay in Philadelphia’s security industry is low and benefits are minimal.¹⁷ A survey of 2,341 security officers found that the median pay rate is \$10 an hour.¹⁸ This is less than half the median wage of the Philadelphia workforce overall. Some officers report earning as little as \$8 an hour.¹⁹

Philadelphia’s security officers are paid less than workers in comparable industries. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which includes higher paid armed and in-house officers in its calculations, nonetheless indicates that security officers’ wages trail other occupations that require similar qualifications in terms of education and job-specific training.



“Organizing is about more than benefits, it is about respect.”

– Tyra McFarland

Beyond low pay, Philadelphia’s security officers receive few meaningful benefits. According to the American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, security officers are twice as likely as the overall city workforce to rely on public assistance for their health care.²⁰ Security officers interviewed also report receiving few, if any, paid days off.²¹

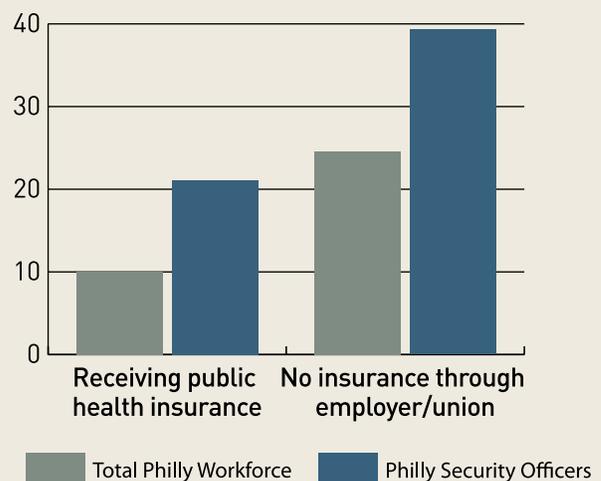
Security Officer Wages Lag Behind Other Philadelphia Wages

Philadelphia Metropolitan Area Private Sector Wages by Occupation

OCCUPATION	MEAN HOURLY WAGE
All workers	\$22.82
Driver/sales workers and truck drivers	\$19.78
Receptionists and information clerks	\$16.04
Mail clerks and mail machine operators, except postal service	\$13.64
Grounds maintenance workers	\$13.53
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	\$12.53
Security jobs	\$11.70

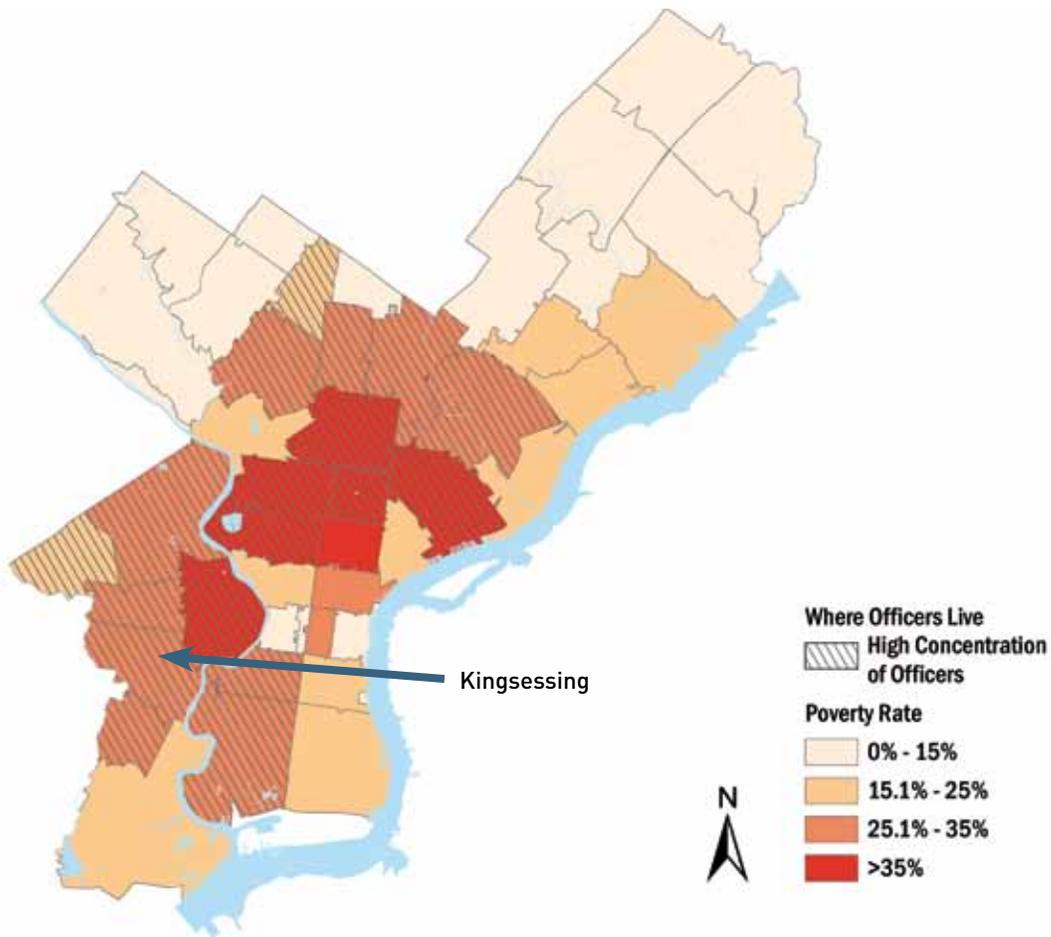
Source: The Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey, Philadelphia MSA, January 2010

Security Officers Lack Access to Affordable Health Care



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010, 1-year estimate

Security Officers Live in Neighborhoods with High Poverty Rates



A CLOSER LOOK AT WHERE PHILADELPHIA'S SECURITY OFFICERS LIVE

NEIGHBORHOOD SNAPSHOT: KINGSESSING

One in 10 security officers lives in Kingsessing in southwest Philadelphia, a neighborhood with high rates of unemployment and poverty.²²

CENSUS FACTS ON KINGSESSING²³

- 84.8% Black or African-American
- Median household income: \$30,538
- 28.8% residents live below the poverty level
- Unemployment rate: 10.4%
- 18.9% of the housing stock is vacant



Alyssa Moore is a 25-year-old security officer and working mother who lives with her children in Kingsessing: “Getting better wages would help a lot. I am the mother of twins. Everything is expensive now, prices are going up. The cost of living in Philly is unfortunately high.”

SOLUTION: RAISING INDUSTRY STANDARDS

TAKING A STAND FOR GOOD JOBS AND STRONG COMMUNITIES

Philadelphia's security officers are coming together to win better pay and meaningful benefits. Raising industry standards would greatly improve the lives of security officers and their families. Just as important, better pay and benefits would improve the well-being of communities where Philadelphia's working-class families live. The money security officers make, as with all working people, funnels right back into the community: in rent and mortgage payments, local taxes, and consumer spending in local stores. Better industry standards help fuel the local economy as much as they help families make ends meet and build a brighter future for their children.

Raising standards for the 3,000 security officers in Philadelphia's private security industry could bring millions to the local economy. In the next decade, raising pay such that the average security officer with two children would be ineligible for food stamps would generate an additional \$140 million for Philadelphia's security officers and their families.²⁴ Using the multiplier employed by the University of Pennsylvania to calculate their total economic impact, the effect of transforming security jobs into good jobs could generate upwards of \$230 million dollars of economic activity over the next 10 years.²⁵



"I am struggling to make ends meet. I only make \$8 an hour. The company's health plan costs \$100 a month and my rent is \$400 a month. After that, there is nothing left over."

– Damon Harris

Investing in communities through improved pay and benefits is one of the most effective and productive ways to stimulate the local economy. A study by the Economic Roundtable in 2007 found that greater income from unionization in Los Angeles created \$11 billion dollars in economic activity and 64,800 jobs.²⁶



"Making a decent wage would mean a lot to our communities."

– Jean Bradley

Raising pay and benefit standards in the private security industry would give Philadelphia's poorest neighborhoods a meaningful economic boost. Survey results indicate that 90 percent of Philadelphia's security officers live within the city limits. A majority live in pockets of North and West Philadelphia, neighborhoods where the city is struggling.²⁷ Transforming security jobs into good jobs would bring resources into the neighborhoods that need them most.

THE UNION DIFFERENCE

BETTER PAY AND BENEFITS

Forming a union and negotiating with employers for improved pay, benefits, and working conditions has proven a successful way of raising standards for security officers in other cities. In New York City, 10,000 security officers have joined 32BJ SEIU since 2004 and they have made significant gains. Nearly 80 percent of the unionized security officers in New York receive

employer-paid health care. New York security officer and 32BJ union member Carla Thomas explains, "Before we formed a union, I had to work two jobs to support my family. Now I only have to work one and I have more time with my kids. I now have a way forward." New York security officers have made other important gains, including paid sick days, paid holidays, and paid vacation.

Security officers in Washington, D.C. also have raised industry standards in their city. Since 2008, close to 2,000 security officers have joined 32BJ SEIU, winning average wage increases of approximately 36 percent. The majority of officers now have employer-provided health care, and all have won paid days off. Raquel Mack, a D.C.-based security officer, explains, "Before we organized or had the protection of a union, we were really struggling to get by. We made as little as \$8 an hour without any benefits and many of us had to rely on public programs just to support our families. Now we earn more per hour and for the first time, we have



Security officer Verrel Rhyne speaking at Love Park about the importance of good jobs and an economy that works for all Philadelphians.

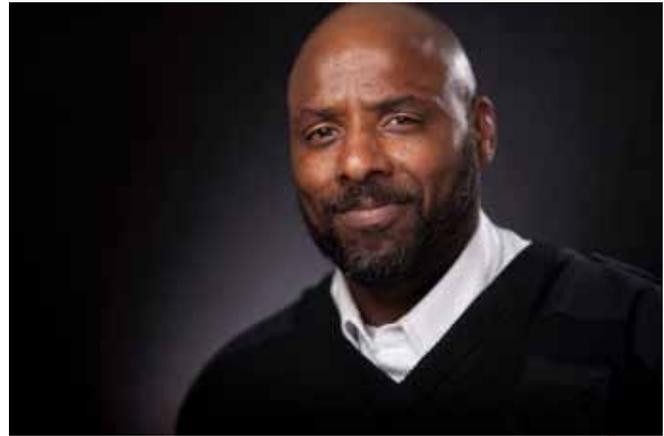
quality health care. We also get the respect we deserve for who we are and for the work we do.”

GREATER SAFETY THROUGH REDUCED TURNOVER AND IMPROVED TRAINING

Private security is a profession, and treating security officers accordingly leads to significant improvements in training and greatly lowers turnover. Together, these make security services that much more effective. Keeping experienced security officers on the job and standing up for adequate staffing levels, proper equipment, and rigorous training all enable security officers to respond to – and help prevent – emergency situations.

Research shows that turnover rates are lower in unionized workplaces than they are in non-union sites. This translates into lower training costs and greater productivity for employers.²⁸ In New York City buildings where security officers do not have a union, turnover averaged 148 percent. By contrast, turnover in buildings where security officers have formed a union averaged just 6 percent during the same time period.

Security officers in New York have won new opportunities for training. The 32BJ SEIU Thomas Shortman Training Fund, a joint labor-management organization, has spearheaded an innovative approach to raising standards by working in conjunction with the New York City Police and Fire Departments, the Realty Advisory Board (an association of building owners and major property management companies),



“We are more than just bodies in uniforms. We are people with families we need to support, just like everybody else.”

– Kevin Upshaw

the Partnership for New York City (a prominent business group), the Office of Emergency Management, the City University of New York John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and others to develop a state-of-the-art security training program. Security officers now receive extensive training that greatly advances their skills and professionalizes the industry.



“People who work hard should be able to go after the American Dream – to have a home, the chance of an education, and to live comfortably. We shouldn’t be struggling to cover our basic needs.”

– Keith Keyes

GOOD JOBS, BRIGHTER FUTURE

RAISING STANDARDS in the security industry in Philadelphia is both essential and achievable. The industry is growing and profitable. A security workforce that is treated with respect, and accordingly is highly trained, should be important to the city's workforce, residents, and visitors. To Philadelphia's working families, far too many of which have been hit hard by the shift away from good manufacturing jobs to low-wage service employment, transforming private security jobs into good jobs is tremendously important. Decent jobs are not just good for families, they are good for entire communities. Good jobs lessen dependence on public services and bring resources – and a brighter future – to cities and their residents.

The people of Philadelphia have a proud history of creating good jobs. Health care workers, building trades workers, office cleaners and others have fought for, and won, better

working conditions and fair compensation for themselves and their families. More than 2,600 office building cleaners working in over 100 buildings in Philadelphia won a new contract in October 2011 that includes a wage and benefits package that continues to raise pay and to provide employer-paid benefits, such as health care and paid days off, for the next four years. These workers are members of 32BJ SEIU. Continued success at the bargaining table means economic security for thousands of Philadelphia's working families, and much-needed dollars injected into the city's neighborhoods.

To the same end, thousands of Philadelphia's security officers are now forming a union with 32BJ SEIU and preparing to negotiate their first contract to transform their jobs into good jobs with decent pay, quality benefits, and respect. Their success will help build a safer, more prosperous Philadelphia.



Security officers in Philadelphia are forming a union with 32BJ SEIU to raise standards in their industry and better the lives of the city's working families.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Occupational Outlook Handbook," March 29, 2012, Retrieved April 18, 2012 from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/Protective-Service/Security-guards.htm>.
- 2 Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry, Center for Workforce Information & Analysis "Philadelphia-Camben-Wilmington MSA (PA Counties Only Occupational Employment)," p. 12.
- 3 ACS 2006, 1-year estimate (Project of the U.S. Census) via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*. Following the 2000 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau removed long format questions from the Census and placed them into the annual American Community Survey (ACS). As a result income questions are now reported as part of the ACS. Census tract level information is reported in the 5-year estimates. Data comparison between Census 2000 and ACS 2010, 5-year estimate, Project of the U.S. Census via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*.
- 4 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Unemployment Rates by County in Pennsylvania, February 2012," Retrieved April 30, 2012 from <http://www.bls.gov/ro3/palAus.htm>.
- 5 ACS 2000, 1-year estimate compared to ACS 2010, 1-year estimate (Project of the U.S. Census) via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*.
- 6 The Pew Charitable Trust, "Philadelphia 2011 The State of the City," 2011, p. 16.
- 7 Public Citizens for Children and Youth, "Hundreds of Thousands of Philadelphia Households with Children Unable to Afford Enough Food to Feed the Family in 2009-2010," August 11, 2011, Retrieved April 17, 2012 from https://www.pccy.org/index.php?page=__88&pressid=72.
- 8 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and Economic Policy Institute, "Pulling apart: A State By State Analysis of Income Trends, 2004-2006," April 2008, p. 18 & 21.
- 9 Dēmos & the Keystone Research Center, "Under Attack: Pennsylvania's Middle Class and the Jobs Crisis," July 18, 2011, p. 8.
- 10 David Autor and David Dorn, "The Growth of Low Skill Service Jobs and the Polarization of the U.S. Labor Market," April 2012, p. 3 & 23.
- 11 Dēmos & the Keystone Research Center, "Under Attack: Pennsylvania's Middle Class and the Jobs Crisis," July 18, 2011, p. 10.
- 12 The Pew Charitable Trust, "Philadelphia 2011 The State of the City," 2011, p. 34.
- 13 The Pew Charitable Trust, "Philadelphia 2011 The State of the City," 2011, p. 6.
- 14 Julie Shaw, the Philadelphia Inquirer, "In Philly, Higher Poverty, Lower Income," September 22, 2001.
- 15 Julie Shaw, the Philadelphia Inquirer, "In Philly, Higher Poverty, Lower Income," September 22, 2001.
- 16 The majority of workers (59%) are between the age of 25-54, which researchers Rankin and Levitan describe as "prime age" or the age when people are most likely to have dependents and be the primary breadwinner for a family. Nancy Rankin and Mark Levitan, Community Service Society, "Shortchanging Security," Summer 2006, p. 5.
- 17 Worker Interviews, Philadelphia, January to March 2012.
- 18 Catalist Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia, January to March 2012.
- 19 Catalist Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia, January to March 2012.
- 20 ACS 2010, 1-year estimate (Project of the U.S. Census) via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*.
- 21 Worker Interviews, Philadelphia, January to March 2012.
- 22 ACS 2010, 1-year estimate (Project of the U.S. Census) via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*.
- 23 ACS 2010, 1-year estimate (Project of the U.S. Census) via *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) census*.
- 24 Calculations were based off survey findings and SNAP Income Limits. Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, "SNAP Income Limits," March 8, 2012, Retrieved May 1, 2012 from <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/foradults/supplementalnutritionassistanceprogram/snapincomelimits/index.htm> & Catalist Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia, January to March 2012.
- 25 Calculations were based on survey findings and application of the multiplier effect used by the University of Pennsylvania. The University of Pennsylvania utilizes a multiplier to "represent the estimated times each dollar is spent within the economy" in order to calculate the economic impact of the university and health system on the Philadelphia economy. The University of Pennsylvania,

“Economic & Fiscal Impact Report,” April 2006, p. 4, footnote 4, and Catalyst Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia, January to March 2012.

26 Daniel Flaming, Economic Roundtable, Los Angeles Business Journal, “Organized Labor Lists LA Economy,” September 1, 2008.

27 Catalyst Voter Database, Worker Survey Data Philadelphia, January to March 2012.

28 Fine, Janice. “Advantages of Unionization in the Security Industry for Newark Workers and the Community as a Whole.” November 2, 2011.

With more than 120,000 members, 32BJ SEIU is the largest union of property service workers in the U.S. We are united to raise standards at work and improve conditions in our communities so that one day “working poor” will be a contradiction in terms. For more information about us: www.seiu32bj.org. For more about security officers’ efforts to raise industry standards: www.respectsecurity.org.



32BJ SEIU
42 S. 15th St., Suite 200
Philadelphia, PA 19102