



For Immediate Release
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Janitors and Supporters Rally to Protest Impact Cleaning's Schemes

Community leaders call on Avison Young and other building managers to allow audits of all Impact-cleaned sites

TORONTO – More than 50 Impact Cleaning Services (Impact) janitors and their supporters held a rally today in downtown Toronto to protest Impact's employment practices. They marched down Bay Street, the city's financial core, with banners, placards, and chants. Their message was loud and clear: It's time for *Justice for Janitors*.

Workers were joined by community leaders in calling on property owners and managers to allow for an independent audit of Impact's employment practices at buildings where the cleaning is contracted out to them. Impact Cleaning Services workers face some of the worst working conditions in Toronto. The company they work for operates an elaborate sub-contracting scheme which results in many workers being denied basic Employment Standards Act protections.

"Companies like Avison Young must be responsible and hold contractors like Impact accountable," says Carmen Martinez, "they cannot continue to turn a blind eye while Impact exploits workers."

David Poopalapillai of the Canadian Tamil Congress, John Cartwright of the Toronto & York Region Labour Council, and Peter Tabuns, MPP Toronto-Danforth of the NDP, were all there to support the janitors and spoke at the rally. The janitors were also joined by members of Unite HERE Local 75, hotel workers who often face similar obstacles.

"We the hotel workers are here in solidarity with the janitors – Toronto stands on the shoulders of immigrant workers like us – it's time that our politicians join us and take a firm stand against companies that break the law," says Carlos Almeida, a member of Hotel Workers Rising – Unite HERE Local 75.

The rally, organized by SEIU Local 2 *Justice for Janitors*, follows a joint letter released by community leaders a week ago. The letter, calling for the independent audit, was signed by the Canadian Tamil Congress, the Chinese Canadian National Congress –Toronto Chapter, the Canadian Hispanic

Congress, the Toronto and York region labour Council and other community groups. "In a city like Toronto, everyone should be able to earn a living wage," says John Cartwright, *president of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council*. "For workers in the service industry, the only way to accomplish that is to ensure that their right to form a union is respected."

Impact janitors say they will continue to struggle to create a better future for their families by coming together. "The company did everything in its power to stop us, but at Jane and Finch Mall, Sudanese, Portuguese, and Latino workers all came together," says Martinez. "We can work towards a better future as part of SEIU Justice for Janitors, but in order to be successful we must help our brothers and sisters unite." Many other Impact workers remain out in the cold, vulnerable to Impact's abuses.

Background:

Justice for Janitors:

SEIU Justice for Janitors (J4J) is a workers' movement with broad-based support from the public as well as community, political and religious leaders.

Together we work to provide better wages, benefits, and job security for janitors who clean luxurious buildings yet make poverty wages. For over twenty years SEIU's J4J movement has helped low-wage workers achieve respect at work in Canada and the United States.

Over 2000 janitors in Toronto have already united under the Justice for Janitors banner. However suspect employer practices continue to create unfair obstacles for workers who want to unite to create a better future for their families.

Impact:

Impact Cleaning Services workers face some of the worst working conditions in Toronto. The company they work for operates an elaborate sub-contracting scheme.

This scheme results in many workers being denied basic Employment Standards Act protections. Many don't receive any vacation pay, Employment Insurance and in some cases have no WSIB coverage. In some instances workers have spoken out about being paid less than minimum wage.

Photos and Video Footage available upon request.

For more information:

Please visit www.Negative-Impact.org

The Service Employees International Union is the largest and fastest growing union in North America, with 100,000 workers in Canada and 2 million workers across Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico.