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HOFFA: TEAMSTERS STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH OCCUPY WALL STREET MOVEMENT

Official Statement of Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa

(WASHINGTON) – The following is the official statement from Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa issued today about the Occupy Wall Street protest:

"No one should be surprised that Occupy Wall Street is gaining support and spreading quickly around the country. The American Dream has disappeared for students, whose reality is debt and unemployment. The dream disappeared for workers forced to take wage cuts by employers sitting on billions of dollars in profits. The dream disappeared for working families who paid too steep a price for Wall Street's greed, stupidity and fraud.

"It's clear what this movement is all about. It's about taking America back from the CEOs and billionaires on Wall Street who have destroyed our nation's economy. It's about creating good jobs. It's about corporate America treating its workers and customers with honesty and fairness and paying its fair share to stimulate the economy.

"Teamsters all over the country are participating in Occupy Wall Street events, and I support and encourage them. We stand in solidarity with Americans who want better lives for themselves and for future generations."

Founded in 1903, the Teamsters Union represents more than 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Visit www.teamster.org for more information.

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October 5, 2011

Sisters and Brothers,

On behalf of 40,000 members in the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), I want to thank you for organizing your "Occupy Wall Street" protest in New York City which is inspiring millions of Americans.

Most of us are tired of seeing a handful of the richest corporations and executives behave as though they're entitled to live like kings at everyone's expense:

They aren't paying their fair share of taxes, so schools are cutting back and colleges are raising fees – leaving students with obscene debts. It's time for the millionaires – the richest 1% - to start paying their fair share so we can support education and other vital services.

They're destroying our democracy and right to a voice in the workplace. By making it almost impossible for workers to form unions and negotiate fair agreements, corporate America is dragging down the living standards for all working families.

They're threatening to destroy Social Security and Medicare for future generations. We can't allow corporations to privatize and profit from these programs. Instead, we should close the loopholes so corporations and the rich start paying the same contributions as everyone else.

Your decision to bring these and other issues to corporate America's doorstep is courageous – and involves some risks. We weren't surprised that some of you have faced beatings and pepper spray from overzealous police. Your crusade to shine a light on the corruption and injustice that's infecting Wall Street is bound to ruffle some feathers. We've experienced some similar rough treatment in Longview, Washington, where ILWU families are also taking a stand against corporate greed. Our fight there is against EGT, a multi-national corporation that took taxpayer subsidies to build a grain export terminal – then betrayed workers and the community.

Like you, ILWU members in Longview have been arrested, beaten and pepper sprayed. We know that justice won't be won by asking greedy employers for permission or waiting for politicians to pass laws. That's why we hope that you'll stand your ground on Wall Street while we do the same in Longview – because *An Injury To One Is An Injury To All!*

In solidarity

Robert McEllrath
International President

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