

UNITE HERE Local 11 cancels strike by 2,000 hospitality workers days before 2026 FIFA World Cup

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On June 9, the UNITE HERE Local 11 union, representing around 2,000 bartenders, cooks, servers, cashiers, food attendants and dishwashers at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, cancelled a planned strike against SoFi Stadium's food service provider, Legends Global.

The cancellation was justified with the announcement of a tentative agreement less than a week after 96 percent of the rank and file voted overwhelmingly to strike on June 5.

The agreement was reportedly approved by 99.6 percent on June 11 with no information on the total number of votes cast among the 2,000 members involved in this contract.

The union has touted that the new contract contained significant wage increases, protections against subcontracting and automation and privacy protections concerning immigration status and country of origin data, but the union has denied workers the right to see the actual contract.

Members began voting on the tentative agreement on June 10, while UNITE HERE Local 11 declared that "Full details [were] to be released following ratification," meaning that workers did not see any details of the contract they voted on.

As of yet, the full contract language has not been publicly released. The only information that has been released by the leadership are vague "highlights" which union officials are selling as a "historic agreement."

According to the union, cooks who are currently making \$31 an hour are projected to make somewhere between \$38-\$39 an hour in two years at the end of their contract.

Kurt Petersen, co-president of UNITE HERE Local 11, stated that tip workers, such as servers and bartenders, will receive a 30 percent wage increase at the end of their contract as well.

With the average server and bartender making around \$17 an hour, according to data from Glassdoor, this pay raise would still be insufficient for workers living in one of the most expensive areas of Southern California.

Little else has been said about other job classifications,

such as cashiers, food attendants, dishwashers and concessions workers.

The wage increases by themselves are misleading given the fact that hospitality workers are not guaranteed a predictable schedule since they are only employed when events take place at SoFi Stadium.

Some workers, especially bartenders, servers and cashiers, work fewer than 25 hours a week on average and are constantly on-call for employment with no guaranteed hours or set schedule, making employment in other jobs, as well as balancing personal and social life, extremely difficult.

Workers also voted to strike over privacy concerns related to background checks and accreditation procedures requiring them to disclose their immigration status and country of origin, information which would be accessible to federal agencies, such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

These were legitimate concerns given the fact that DHS officials announced that ICE agents would be deployed to the World Cup to assist with federal public safety functions, supposedly in connection with issues such as trafficking, counterfeit goods and other criminal activity.

ICE agents will also be deployed to other FIFA World Cup events between June and July across 11 US host cities, including New York, Dallas, Miami, Atlanta, Seattle, San Francisco and Kansas City, metropolitan areas with a high density of immigrant workers and communities.

According to Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security told him federal authorities would be at the matches to assist with security but not civil immigration enforcement.

As the *World Socialist Web Site* reported during the deployment of ICE at the 2026 Winter Olympics in Italy earlier this year, such deployments have nothing to do with safety or security but with conditioning the public to police state methods of rule.

The ICE squads illegally occupying Minneapolis and other US cities operate without democratic constraints. Videos of the targeted execution on January 24 of Intensive Care Unit nurse Alex Pretti by immigration agents in Minneapolis, after the similar murder of mother Renée Nicole Good on January 7, have starkly shown this to hundreds of millions worldwide. By deploying ICE in Milan, Meloni is legitimizing murder and intimidation of migrants and protesters in Italy and across Europe.

The same policy is being implemented in Los Angeles and other major cities. Immigrants are being intimidated and rounded up, a central component of the ongoing conspiracy for dictatorship spearheaded by the Trump administration.

Infuriated over the dangers associated with violent ICE agents conducting “security” at their jobs, these 2,000 workers have shown their willingness to fight back only for the UNITE HERE Local 11 bureaucracy to sabotage their leverage at the last minute.

The strength of a work stoppage would have been immense, as it threatened to disrupt the June 12 US opening match for the 2026 FIFA World Cup between the US and Paraguay.

A strike would have placed workers in a very powerful position to win their demands and get ICE out of their workplaces and communities due to the fact that FIFA requires all stadium workers to pass accreditation and background checks before any of their scheduled events, making replacement staff difficult to procure on such short notice.

According to the union, workers will supposedly retain the right to walk off the job if ICE raids or detentions were to occur at their workplace.

However, this can only occur “... if the Union determines in good faith that federal immigration agency actions threaten worker safety during a World Cup match,” according to their released highlights.

In other words, if the UNITE HERE Local 11 bureaucracy deems that ICE operations are not a threat to worker safety, even as ICE kidnaps and kills workers in the surrounding communities, then workers will be kept on the job.

Rank-and-file workers, not trade union bureaucrats, should be the ones to make the call whether or not Trump’s ICE gestapo poses a threat to their safety. They should be the ones to decide whether or not to walk off the job in response to these threats.

This betrayal exposes that the UNITE HERE Local 11 bureaucracy functions as an instrument of class collaboration and not a genuine fighting organization for workers.

As a whole, the UNITE HERE Local 11 union covers hotel and hospitality workers—a workforce that is overwhelmingly immigrant and Latino—across Southern California and Arizona regions that employ some of the most exploited workers in one of the most expensive areas of the United States.

The majority of members earn between \$20 and \$25 per hour (around \$40,000-\$50,000 annually), while housing in Los Angeles and Orange County consumes 50-60 percent of a two-income household’s take-home pay.

Workers routinely commute one to two hours each way from distant cities because they cannot afford to live near where they work.

The union is co-led by three co-presidents—Kurt Petersen, Ada Briceño and Susan Minato—all of whom are deeply enmeshed in the Democratic Party apparatus and make more than three times the salary of their lowest paid members.

The well-paid officials of Local 11 do not represent the interests of hospitality workers. They represent the interests of a layer of the upper middle class whose careers, incomes and social positions are tied to maintaining “labor peace” for the stadium operators and political stability for the Democrats.

Workers everywhere must be prepared to fight back. This requires the building of rank-and-file committees in every school, community and workplace which will mobilize workers against ICE raids and the advances towards dictatorship.

The trade union bureaucracy will not take up this fight. This fight must be advanced by workers on the shop floors themselves.



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