1,300 casino workers strike Wynn Resorts' Encore Boston Harbor

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More than 1,300 workers walked out on strike at Encore Boston Harbor in Everett, Massachusetts at 7 a.m. on Friday, September 4. Some 300 workers picketed and shut the Broadway entrance to the casino.

The strikers are housekeepers, cooks, food and beverage staff, slot attendants and cage cashiers, valet and limousine drivers, dispatchers, traffic attendants, groundskeepers, warehouse workers and call center staff. The majority are members of UNITE HERE Local 26 and 211 are organized in Teamsters Local 25. Their contract expired on Monday, August 31. Negotiations had been ongoing since April but with no agreement as the contract expiration approached. On August 20 the membership voted by 97 percent to authorize strike action.

As of Monday, September 7, no further bargaining sessions have been scheduled, according to NBC Boston. The casino has not closed. It traded through the holiday weekend and continues to operate using management and non-union staff.

Wages at Encore are currently from $15 to $32 an hour and the unions are demanding $10 an hour over three years for non-tipped workers and $5 an hour for tipped workers. Alongside the wage demand, the strikers are fighting to preserve their existing healthcare. The company is seeking to fund coverage out of the wage increase.

The Encore strike is part of a broad offensive across hospitality, logistics and services since 2021. In the casino industry workers are facing automated table games, cashless and app-based play, self-service check-in, all of which is being used to end guaranteed hours. Workers are fighting to defend contractual guarantees of minimum weekly hours. The union says these guarantees are being stripped out. Encore denies it is seeking to eliminate them but in reality workers are in a fight for the future of these jobs.

The demands put forward by the union amount to those settled with Boston hotels in December 2024 after a wave of strikes across the city. Local 26 settled contracts covering 28 of Boston's 36 union hotels—around 90 percent of union hotel rooms—on terms of $10 an hour over four years for non-tipped workers and $5 an hour for tipped workers, with signing bonuses of $1,000 and $500.

In the Encore strike they are asking for wages to be brought to the level they settled 21 months ago, in a city where housing costs have continued to increase. The demand is not an advance but a catch-up—and a catch-up that has already been eroded by 21 months of rising living costs.

While Encore Boston has seen declines in revenue, it still had $846.9 million in revenue in 2025 and its profit for that year was $236.7 million. Wynn Resorts, which owns Encore, made profits of $2.22 billion last year.

Encore says it is "committed to finding common ground that is fair, financially sustainable and protects jobs for the long term." A Wynn Resorts spokesperson said "the unions have chosen to initiate a strike despite our continued efforts." The company argues that union wages and benefits have risen by nearly 40 percent over four years while revenue grew by around 2 percent, and states that the average compensation package for its unionized staff exceeds $95,000 a year.

The $95,000 "compensation package" is not a wage. It is total employment cost including the employer's contribution to the healthcare and pension benefits the company is now seeking to shift onto the workers. A property still generating $236.7 million in annual operating profit is not a depressed company.

In the fiscal year ending 2025, Wynn Resorts reported compensation for chief executive Craig Billings of

$15,090,901. That is **296 times** the company's median employee pay of roughly $51,000. A CEO who makes nearly 300 times their salary has the gall to describe workers' demand for $10 an hour over three years as financially unsustainable.

The Teamsters' press release announcing the strike quoted Local 25 president Thomas G. Mari: "When a company refuses to respect the workers who make its profits possible, we shut it down." Tommy Blitsch, director of the Teamsters' casino division, said, "Encore management has pushed our members to the brink because they thought they could take our labor for granted."

But four days in nothing has been shut down. The resort is trading normally with replacement and non-union labor. The union bureaucrats are not conducting this strike as a fight to shut the casino and win, but as a pressure tactic aimed at producing a settlement they can sell to the membership.

The 1,300 workers at Encore should appeal directly to workers across Wynn's properties. The group has 28,500 employees worldwide, with roughly 12,000 in Macau, China, and 16,500 in the US. The bulk of Wynn's profit is generated in Macau, where the company operates several large casino resorts and where its workers face the same intensification of exploitation, automation, and suppression of union organization.

Wynn Las Vegas has never had a strike, but this is not because they don't face the same issues as their brothers and sisters in Everett. In November 2023 a 95 percent authorization for a strike of 35,000 workers was sabotaged by the Culinary Workers Union (Local 226). After refusing to set a strike date for nearly two months, hours before the 5 a.m. strike deadline on November 10, the union announced tentative agreements with all the casinos—Caesars, MGM and finally Wynn, the last deal coming just three hours before the deadline.

The militancy of the Encore workers is not in doubt; 97 percent voted to strike and they are on the picket line into a fifth day. What will decide the outcome is who controls the strike.

The *World Socialist Web Site* calls for the formation of a rank-and-file committee at Encore Boston Harbor, independent of both union apparatuses and elected from every department across both locals. Such a committee would take responsibility for the conduct of the strike, insist that every proposal is placed before the membership in full and in good time, and assert the right to reject a tentative agreement presented under deadline pressure.

It would turn to Wynn workers in Las Vegas and Macau who face the same employer and to hospitality workers across Boston and the logistics workers whose deliveries sustain the property. The committee should seek to mobilize support internationally through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.