



Text File

Introduced: 5/5/2009

Bill No: 2009-1386, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS it is the stated mission of the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership to "foster a welcoming, economically viable Downtown"; and

WHEREAS the Partnership attempts to achieve this commendable goal by, among things, providing "Safety Ambassadors" so that visitors and residents are safe and are properly and courteously directed to the locations they wish to visit; and a "Clean Team" to remove trash and ensure that the sidewalks in Downtown are clean and properly maintained; and

WHEREAS the Partnership retains contractors to employ the employees who serve as Safety Ambassadors and the Clean Team; and

WHEREAS the employees of these contractors, who serve the citizens of Pittsburgh and the City's visitors, have a federally protected right to organize with a union and to act collectively to better their wages and working conditions; and

WHEREAS the Partnership, as representative of our City and its values, should use a responsible contractor that demonstrates a respect for the rights of employees to organize, and that is committed to providing decent wages and affordable health insurance for employees and their families; and

WHEREAS Block by Block, the current contractor retained by the Partnership to employ Safety Ambassadors, has engaged in conduct that, we believe, demonstrates an antipathy towards workers' rights; and

WHEREAS the National Labor Relations Board is currently investigating charges that Block by Block has violated workers' federally protected rights here in Pittsburgh in severe and profound ways by, among other things, prohibiting employees from wearing union buttons; prohibiting employees from talking to the media; conducting unlawful surveillance of employees as they peacefully leafleted about their working conditions; and unlawfully interrogating employees about their union support; and

WHEREAS Block by Block has engaged in similar conduct in Newark, New Jersey, in response to the Ambassadors in Newark seeking to organize with a union, and the National Labor Relations Board in Newark is currently investigating charges that Block by Block has unlawfully interrogated employees about their union support; prohibited employees from wearing union insignia; singled out union supporters and retaliated against them, including by imposing unwarranted discipline, layoffs, and reductions in hours; and made unlawful coercive statements to employees about the union of their choice; and

WHEREAS workers who want a union at their workplace should have the right to choose how they want to go about unionizing. This is why the City Council resolved to support the Employee Free Choice Act, which lets workers, not employers, decide whether they want card check or a secret ballot election, and imposes greater penalties on employers that unlawfully interfere with the rights of workers to unionize; and

WHEREAS the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership should retain only responsible contractors that respect workers' rights to organize and better their working conditions and lives; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOVLED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh hereby affirms its opposition to employer interference with the rights of workers to unionize, and urges the Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and Block by Block to respect workers' rights; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Council supports card check recognition and urges the Pittsburgh

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Downtown Partnership and Block by Block to let the Safety Ambassadors choose the method by which they wish to bring a union to their workplace.