

G4S SECURE SOLUTIONS USA CONTRACT EXTENSION

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SEIU, Local 49

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Testimony to Portland City Council
 Provided by Nicole Knudsen
 Strategic Researcher, SEIU Local 49
 3536 SE 26th Ave., Portland, OR 97202

RE: Request for Proposals for Uniformed Security Officer Services, RFP No. 116370

March 19, 2014

Mayor Hales and Commissioners,

My name is Nicole Knudsen and I am a strategic researcher with the Service Employees International Union, Local 49. SEIU Local 49 is a 10,000 member union in Oregon and SW Washington and represents over 600 security officers in the Metro area, including the majority of security officers in the downtown Portland commercial real estate market. I am here today along with our members to discuss the City's current Request for Proposal (RFP) for its private security services. We understand that today's agenda item is for extending the City's current security contract, but we would like to take this opportunity to encourage the city to continue to use a responsible contractor and to raise some concerns with some of the content in the current RFP.

We greatly appreciate the City's prior commitment to using a union contractor for its private security services. It is particularly important given this low-wage industry that the City has in the past chosen a responsible contractor, one that has provided a path forward for officers and their families in terms of wages, health care, retirement, and a voice on the job. In turn, the City enjoys increased stability and security in City buildings as union contractors experience lower turn-over and a more stable workforce. We hope that the City continues this investment in good jobs in our community by continuing to use a union contractor for its private security services.

We are troubled, however, by the inclusion in this RFP of the Essential Functions Performance Test as this test prescribes physical fitness requirements

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that we believe are unreasonable in their current form. These fitness components are unrelated to a security officer's actual job duties and we are greatly concerned that immediate implementation of this test will have a disproportionately adverse effect on aging officers, medically fragile officers, and officers who experience a disability.

A security officer's job requirements in City buildings generally involve monitoring and observing, and providing information to the public along with traffic control. The RFP specifically states that officers should not attempt to handle dangerous physical events, but rather are expected to call for police or other responders to handle such situations. Many officers threatened by the immediate implementation of the Essential Functions test have worked in City buildings for years, and their extensive experience and knowledge of these buildings is invaluable in ensuring the safety of City workers.

Given this, the Essential Functions test as currently designed is not substantially related to a security officer's actual job requirements. Among a long list, the Essential Functions test mandates officers must be able to ascend three flights of stairs, lift 30 lbs vertically from 53 inches to 12 inches overhead, and horizontally transfer 68 lbs. of force on a sled a distance of 54 feet within strict time limits. As the officers with me today will attest, these requirements bear little relation to their actual duties of observing and alerting "first responders" in the event of an emergency.

Furthermore, this test would require some of the City's lowest-paid workers to meet stringent physical requirements, and meet those requirements immediately in order to maintain their jobs. We know that wages and benefits have a direct relationship to workforce health, as workers in low-wage industries typically have reduced access to healthcare resulting in chronic medical issues going untreated. The starting wage for a private security officer in a City building is only \$11.00/hour, with many officers only achieving access to adequate and affordable

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healthcare benefits in January of this year. In contrast, a starting firefighter in Portland makes \$20.02/hour with a fitness requirement that is far more lenient. A Portland police officer's wages start at approximately \$21.02/hour with no formal fitness requirement.

We do agree, however, in the value of the City's effort to promote a healthy workforce. Promoting a healthy workforce is an aspirational goal, and any new fitness program should be rolled out with a realistic timeframe. We have been gathering materials of similar programs and would be happy to share them with you. We hope to be able to work with the City to help develop a realistic program, with a realistic implementation schedule, aimed at preserving safety and stability in City buildings while encouraging improved health for our officers.

Thank you.

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Testimony to Portland City Council
 Provided by Linda Sporer
 Member, SEIU Local 49

RE: Request for Proposals for Uniformed Security Officer Services, RFP No. 116370

March 19, 2014

Good morning Portland City Council and Mayor Charlie Hales,

My name is Linda Sporer. I am a cancer survivor, a grandmother, a union member, and a G4S security officer. I am proud to say I have been helping keep City of Portland buildings safe and secure for close to 9 years.

I am here today to urge you to continue to use a union security company to continue to provide security services for the City of Portland. I am also here today to tell you why the physical requirements, as they now stand in the proposed upcoming contract are too extreme, don't apply the work we do, and will unduly target older and female officers resulting in the layoff of at least half of the current workforce. We are asking the City to partner with us on a solution to raising performance standards.

Number 1: Why the City should use a Union Contractor

As many of you know officers around the Portland area, after a 3 year campaign, organized and won our union. We organized in an effort to raise standards in the subcontracted security industry which was plagued by low wages, low benefits, and high turnover. We won our first contract last May and as a result are on a path to improving standards for low wage security officers. The majority of buildings in downtown Portland are now secured by a union security company. We ask that the City continue to commit to a union security contractor to maintain those hard won improvements.

Number 2: Physical Requirements

The most important skills in my job are my eyes, my ears, and my ability to deescalate situations verbally.

We are often looked to as the first "first responders." We are there to watch, report, monitor, call for assistance to first responders, and in some cases, when necessary, verbally deescalate situations.

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What we do not do in this job is get involved in physical altercations, in fact, we are trained to avoid them, and we do not sprint, tackle, or lift heavy items. In fact that type of behavior would result in increased risk to us and tenants.

Our ability to do our job relies on our knowledge of the buildings we work in, our relationship with the hundreds of City Employees who enter public buildings on a daily basis, our ability to think on our feet and our knowledge of the transient and homeless community. We also rely on our ability and skill to verbally deescalate situations on the few occasions they do occur.

As many of you know for over a year there was an ongoing protest outside of City Hall to call attention to people who experience homelessness in our community. My co-workers and I knew each individual if not by name, then by sight and could know on a daily basis if someone needed extra supervision, and often times could cool down hot tempers by a conversation and the fact that we respected her, and knew her.

The proposed physical requirements in the new contract do not match what we do on a daily basis and do not relate to our on the job requirements. These proposed requirements do not help us do a better job, do not make sense and may be discriminatory. At least half of the current workforce would be laid off if the test in the current RFP were to be applied. That would mean officers with years of experience, knowledge and know-how in these sites would lose their jobs.

We want to partner with the City on finding a path to raising standards for officers that makes sense.

We are some of the lowest paid City of Portland employees. We only secured healthcare at the beginning of this year, and are just starting to build a pathway out of poverty. We believe in raising standards for all officers. However, to expect a workforce that is just coming out of poverty, many of whom have been uninsured until this year to be in peak physical condition is shameful. If what the City is committed to is raising performance standards we can support that, but what we cannot support is the way it is being rolled out. We want to sit down with the City and make a plan to raise standards together.

I hope you and fellow City Council members listen to us today, hear us about what skills it actually takes to secure downtown buildings and partner with us on a path to a healthy and secure future for officers.

Thank you.

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Testimony to Portland City Council
 Provided by Philip Chan
 Member, SEIU Local 49

RE: Request for Proposals for Uniformed Security Officer Services, RFP No. 116370

March 19, 2014

Good morning Mayor Hales and Portland City Council,

My name is Philip Chan. I am currently serving as a member of the United States Army Reserves. As of June 7, 2014, I would have been in for 10 years with at least a year and a half of combat experience.

I am also a Custom Protection Officer at G4S contracted to Tri Met as a Transit Public Safety Officer and I have been a Custom Protection Officer for 6 years.

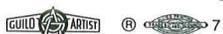
Mayor Hales, you may remember me from when you came out to the walk a day in our shoes. Officers all around Portland came together to form our union to raise the standards in this security industry. I was proud to be part of that effort. While we have made improvements, we still have a long way to go. I hope that the City will continue to invest in a union security company so that we can continue to raise standards for all security personnel.

There are a lot of things that we do on the Tri-Met contract. We patrol the alignment by walking, riding bikes, driving, and riding the trains. We provide customer service and do crowd control during large events. Sometimes we are the first responders, the first ones to arrive on scene to assist or assess the situation if fire/medical/police doesn't get there first. Sometimes we are even there when we weren't called for but we're there just in case. The challenges that we encounter ranges from as little as disputes, public disturbances, misconduct, and/or looking out for people that the police might be looking for to the larger and extreme things like fights, criminal offense, and for things that we might need to call for fire/medical/police response and the attention for a Tri-Met supervisor. There are a lot of things that we encounter but it's a different thing every day; sometimes we may not have anything at all.

I **was** surprised to learn about the new physical requirements that the city was trying to put into this new security contract. On our contract we don't have to meet any physical requirements but we are expected to do physical labor

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sometimes before and after an event, especially during the Starlight Parade and the Grand Floral.

It doesn't make sense to me that the security officers contracted to the City of Portland, some of the lowest paid people are now being asked to meet physical requirements that do not relate to the work that they do on a daily basis.

I would like you to reconsider these physical requirements since it doesn't make any sense and by enforcing them would be a loss to the city as it could result in losing several trained and experienced officers and the jobs of these dedicated officers.

Thank you.

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