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SEIU SETS THE RECORD STRAIGHT ON GOP DISTORTIONS

CHICAGO – *In an effort to score political points, the Illinois Republican Party this week has repeatedly misrepresented the facts about recent political donations made by SEIU Illinois Council and SEIU Healthcare Illinois and Indiana. In response, the labor organization released the following statement:*

Recent attacks on our political donations grossly distort the facts and impugn the integrity of the hard-working, tax-paying, low-wage workers who make small contributions in large numbers to support our PAC and ensure themselves a voice in the legislative discourse.

Officials with the Illinois Republican Party have claimed that we gave political contributions to Illinois Speaker of the House Michael Madigan on August 17th – the date of a special session of the General Assembly – and that these contributions aimed to influence the outcome of a vote on reforms to the state pension system. Both allegations are demonstrably false. These are the facts:

FACT: SEIU's contributions to Speaker Michael Madigan and Senate Majority Leader John Cullerton were made nearly three weeks before the date of the special session. The donations were approved as part of our political endorsement session on July 23rd, and the corresponding checks were cut within the same week and promptly delivered. The claims that the contributions were given on August 17th is false. Moreover, the donations are consistent with our pattern of giving over the past decade.

FACT: Less than 10 percent of SEIU's 170,000 Illinois members have a pension administered by the state – a fact that Republicans have conspicuously chosen to ignore while contriving a false connection between our recent political donations and the subject of the August 17th special session.

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FACT: SEIU's PACs are supported by small donations from our mostly low-wage members. In giving to our PACs, these workers sacrifice some of their limited resources to gain a collective voice in policy debates that have profound ramifications on their jobs, their families, and their communities. The attacks on their recent donations dishonor the democratic process and belittle the average working families who partake in it through PAC donations.