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June 23, 2015

The Honorable
Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk
200 N. Spring St. Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attn: Richard Williams, Legislative Assistant

Re: Council File 14-1371-S5, Transitional Job Program Exemption

Dear Honorable Council Members:

SEIU 721 writes in support of the 18-month exemption for workers participating in transitional job programs. As we continue to move forward with our Minimum Wage policy, we stand in support for those who are the hardest to employ and who are in need of benefits that provide life skills.

Transitional job programs work with a very marginalize and forgotten population. Without the work done by these agencies, this population may be unable to attain and retain a job on their own. Not supporting this type of exemption would fundamentally go against fighting for the everyday worker – we must first fight to elevate them to an even playing field.

We disagree with the message that *because these workers have had challenges, they deserve to be paid less than every other worker in the City*. What we are saying is that they first need to become like every other worker in the City.

These programs are essential to the wellbeing of all workers, and we echo Councilmembers remarks that *we must integrate people into the workforce, and with these programs we are creating better human beings*.

Sincerely,

Bob Schoonover
President

c: Mayor Eric Garcetti
City Attorney Mike Feuer
Sharon Tso, Chief Legislative Analyst
Miguel Santana, Chief Administrative Officer

<http://www.seiu721.org>