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#### **UNION SAYS TENTATIVE DEAL AVERTED B.U. WORKERS' STRIKE**

Boston University service workers have called off a planned strike after reaching a tentative agreement with the school administration.

The employees, who are all members of 32BJ SEIU, the largest property services union in the country, began negotiations with the administration in September. The previous contract expired on Oct. 31 at midnight, and as the hour approached, the service workers saw an outpouring of support from students, faculty and elected officials including Congresswoman-elect Ayanna Pressley and the rest of the Boston City Council, which passed a resolution in support of the union.

"If it weren't for your leadership and support, this workforce would be rendered invisible," Pressley said during a rally, according to the union. "It's not that the oppressed and marginalized are voiceless, it's that they are often unheard and it's because of 32BJ that they are being heard now."

This would have been the second time that BU custodial, maintenance, skilled trade and mail employees went on strike in four years. Members had voted to authorize a strike if a deal wasn't reached by the deadline. The predominant sticking point, according to Local 32BJ, was health insurance. The university was seeking to put employees in the same health plan that covers all other university employees and get rid of the union's health maintenance organization (HMO) plan.

The tentative agreement ensures a wage increase of 2.75 percent in the first year and 2.5 percent in subsequent years, according to the union, and the employees will also remain on their HMO plan.

"This is a major win for the men and women that keep the B.U. campus safe, clean and comfortable for students and faculty every day," Roxana Rivera, vice president of 32BJ SEIU, said in a statement. "The last few weeks have shown B.U. workers that they have the support of the campus community and the new contract will provide a wage increase and quality affordable healthcare that will further protect workers on the job and help them support their own families." - Chris Triunfo/SHNS

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