

# PROFITS, PAIN, AND PILLOWS: HOTELS AND HOUSEKEEPERS IN SAN DIEGO

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*The accommodations industry is hitting record-breaking profits nationally and locally, often with subsidies provided by government entities. Globalization is actually contributing to rising employment and a trade surplus in the tourism industry. However, increasing amenities and new work regimes are causing deteriorating conditions for many workers. In 2006, hotel workers across the country will be coordinating contract negotiations. Housekeepers, who make up almost a quarter of the hotel workforce, are the “face” of the national campaign. Through management interviews, analysis of government data, and a worker survey, this article provides a more complete picture of the living and working conditions of housekeepers in San Diego and nationally.*

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The service sector has long been touted as the new hope for a union comeback. With the offshoring of data entry, computer programming, call centers, medical services, and the like, this hope began to dim. However, globalization has actually caused an expansion of the hotel industry in the U.S., with increasing numbers of international business travelers and tourists. In 2005, there were fifty million international visitors to the U.S., a figure that has almost doubled over the past two decades. Tourism is one of the few industries in the U.S. that runs a trade surplus. Travel and tourism accounted for 28 percent of all service “exports” in 2005.<sup>2</sup>

Because of its immobility, hotel workers may have more leverage in their efforts to organize than other low-wage service workers have seen in recent years. This proposition will soon be tested. This year, for the first time, union contracts expire at hotels across the country. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that, “The potential for a nationwide strike could disrupt business and tourism . . . In addition to Los Angeles, hotel labor contracts expire this year in Boston, Chicago, Honolulu, New York and Toronto.” According to the *Los Angeles Times*, as many as 400 hotels employing 50,000 workers could be involved in the labor dispute.<sup>3</sup> In 2007, contracts at several San Diego hotels will expire.

Room cleaners, known as housekeepers, are emerging as the “face” of the union campaign.<sup>4</sup> These workers, who are almost exclusively female and

**Table 1.** The Top Five Positions in the Accommodations Industry in 2004 and Percent Change to 2014

Occupation	Employment 2004 (in thousands)	2004 %	Percent change 2004–2014
Housekeeping	405	22.5	17
Desk clerks	183	10.2	17.4
Waiters and waitresses	133	7.4	9.5
Maintenance and repair workers	64	3.6	27.2
Cooks	56	3.1	16.7
All occupations	1,796	100	16.9

*Source:* U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

largely of color, make up nearly one of every four positions in the hotel labor force. This article explores the basic questions of who these workers are and what we know about their living and working conditions. Based on management interviews, government and industry statistics, and a worker survey, this article provides a picture of housekeepers in San Diego and nationally. Aside from being a growing sector of the economy and a potentially vital site of new union organizing, the hotel industry is also of particular interest because many hotels are situated on public lands where they receive subsidies from various government entities. In some sense then it is our own tax dollars that are helping to create this employment. This article opens with a brief overview of the vitality of the industry, then looks at management perspectives on a few key issues, and finally compares national and local statistics with our own survey of housekeepers to create a more comprehensive view of these workers.

### The National and Local Hotel Industry

PricewaterhouseCoopers estimated that in 2005, the earnings in the hotel industry rose 25 percent over the previous year. Bjorn Hanson, a managing partner of PricewaterhouseCoopers, said, “The last two years were extraordinary.” This remarkable growth in revenues is a result of rising room rates, especially at the high-end hotels, and particularly on the West Coast.<sup>5</sup> It is predicted that in 2006, profits will top \$25 billion, breaking the record set in 2000 prior to 9/11.<sup>6</sup>

Almost two million workers are now employed in the accommodation industry.<sup>7</sup> There are clearly a wide variety of occupations within the industry, ranging from highly remunerated management positions to the low-wage jobs that make up the “back of the house.” The top five positions in terms of numbers of employed are listed here (Table 1) with their expected growth.

Housekeepers make up by far the largest percentage of any occupation at 23 percent of total hotel employment. This occupation is predicted to increase at a rate of 17 percent over the ten-year period, about the same as industry employment generally.

*The San Diego Hotel Industry*

San Diego is a prime area for tourism in the U.S. According to the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau, twenty-seven million visitors spent \$5.8 billion here in 2005. The bureau reports that there are currently 452 hotels and motels with over 54,000 available rooms in the area. Another 1,500 rooms are offered through casinos, spas, and bed-and-breakfasts.<sup>8</sup>

According to Ernst and Young's annual report on the hotel industry, "San Diego continues to rank as the top-performing market in California and one of the top-performing markets in the United States in terms of RevPAR." RevPAR is the Average Daily Rate (ADR) multiplied by the occupancy rate and is the industry standard in determining financial health. In 2005, San Diego's hotel market was second behind San Francisco within California by RevPAR numbers, although San Diego was experiencing more growth. San Diego also ranked sixth in the nation.

After the decline that the entire industry experienced following 9/11, ADRs and occupancy have steadily increased, raising RevPAR. In 2005, San Diego's occupancy rate was 72.3 percent while nationwide, the occupancy rate stood at 60.7 percent.<sup>9</sup> These figures are especially impressive given that San Diego County added more hotel rooms than any of the top twenty-five in 2005.<sup>10</sup> In 2006, Ernst and Young estimates that the ADR will rise another 5 percent to \$128 per room and occupancy will also continue to climb, putting San Diego's RevPAR over 50 percent above the national average.<sup>11</sup>

The accommodation industry in California in general is experiencing growth at a faster pace than the industry nationwide. From 1997 to 2003, the Gross State Product for the accommodation industry grew 25 percent for the nation, but 30 percent in California.<sup>12</sup>

Obviously, such growth implies an increasing number of jobs in the sector. The number of housekeeper jobs in California is rising particularly fast. It is estimated that there are 90,200 people working as maids and housekeepers in California.<sup>13</sup> By 2012, it is projected that California will have an estimated 108,100 people in this category.<sup>14</sup> This is a 19.8 percent increase. The average employment for all occupations for the state of California is projected to grow 18.6 percent between 2002 and 2012.<sup>15</sup> Clearly, housekeeping as an occupational sector is growing at a faster rate than other employment sectors in the state of California and at a faster rate than the rate for housekeepers nationally.

Moreover, the number of housekeepers in San Diego is rising faster than in California. The local hotel workers' union, UNITE-HERE (UNITE, formerly the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, and HERE, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union), estimates that there are currently 23,815 full-service hotel workers in the county, 2,500 of whom are unionized.<sup>16</sup> According to quarterly figures, from 2002 to 2004, the number employed in the California accommodation industry increased by 7.68 percent, while San Diego demonstrated a 10 percent increase over the two-year period.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, the accommodation industry is a heavy contributor to San Diego's local economy. For the 2002–2003 period, accommodation ranked as number seven of the top ten industries with the greatest employment in San Diego.<sup>18</sup> Despite the relative importance of the accommodation industry, the average monthly earnings for this same period amounted to \$2,012 per month, as compared to \$3,549 for all economic subsectors, or 57 percent.

### *Public Land and Expansion*

As we have seen, San Diego is one of the leading hotel markets in the country, and plans for significant expansion are underway. Thousands of rooms are slated for sites on public land or in redevelopment areas. Downtown redevelopment areas are controlled by the Center City Development Corporation (CCDC), a public nonprofit entity that administers projects for the San Diego Redevelopment Agency. The primary task of the CCDC is to serve as a catalyst in the economic growth of downtown by making public-private partnerships to facilitate redevelopment projects.<sup>19</sup> Center City Development Corporation-approved development takes place in designated Economic Enterprise Zones, which are defined geographic areas where businesses can claim certain state income tax savings and other advantages.

Development projects in these areas and on public land, such as new hotels, are often offered subsidies. These subsidies take multiple forms: tax increments, state tax credits, net operating loss carry-forward, taxpayer-funded infrastructure costs, underwritten environmental review, and reduced or waived city permitting and other fees.<sup>20</sup> Government entities negotiating low rent or revenue-sharing agreements are another subsidy. The most egregious case of this in San Diego was when the city gave \$1 annual leases for each of two hotels being built on bayside property known as Liberty Station. The hotels where almost all the workers in our study worked, the Holiday Inn on the Bay (HIOB) and the Manchester Grand Hyatt (MGH), paid the Port District (on whose land the hotels sit) less than 6 percent of their revenues last year according to Port District records. This (foregone) public money is meant to spur economic growth by making potential development feasible, and is therefore seen by the city or port as an investment. However, critics believe that the city and other public entities are using taxpayer money, which could otherwise be used for city services, to support private enterprise.

Currently, the City of San Diego holds ten hotel leaseholds and the Port District of San Diego has thirteen more. Port hotels include three with over 1,000 rooms each, with the MGH being the largest with 1,625 rooms. In addition, six new hotels are planned on city redevelopment land with over 1,500 rooms and another four hotels on Port lands with over 3,500 rooms.<sup>21</sup> The military also owns land that is leased to private companies. Another complex of over 1,000 rooms is planned on navy land that is “considered one of the best urban building sites on the West Coast,” according to the *San Diego*

*Union-Tribune*.<sup>22</sup> Together, these developments represent a more than 10 percent increase in available rooms.

### **Managerial Perspective**

Interviews were conducted for the purpose of acquiring a sense of managers' perspective on issues we were researching through other sources. The three main interview topics were: ownership, development, and labor supply. Ten interviews were conducted in March and April of 2006 with managers of hotels on public land in San Diego. All managers were voluntary participants whose names and contact information were acquired through public record or through referrals from other participants. While many topics were discussed, we present here only some of the findings on the restructuring of the industry through ownership arrangements and an increased emphasis on branding.

#### *Ownership*

There are several different types of ownership and management arrangements within the hotel industry. The most straightforward of these is when a hotel is owned and operated by the same company. Another common arrangement, according to managers, is that a hotel is owned by one company, for example a REIT (Real Estate Investment Trust),<sup>23</sup> and is then operated by a separate management company, such as Starwood. The same company can be involved in different arrangements. As one manager stated, "[We] own most of our hotels, but we do manage a few for owners." Another manager stated that it is now unusual for a hotel to be owned and operated by the same company.

Several of the managers explained the advantages to such specialization. One manager explained, "For a large company it is better not to have all that capital tied up in the ownership of the property. Let somebody else tie up their capital and then they just collect their management fees, percentage of revenue, whatever the contract is, it is a much better deal for somebody such as Hyatt, Marriott, Starwood, whoever it is." On the other side, there are "real estate mogul types" who are solely interested in property, as one participant put it. Hotels are sometimes sold to REITs but current management continues to operate the facility. One participant said her company had chosen to do this in order to focus more on its brand name, as she put it, "take on more of a model like Marriot." The Marriot has long specialized in management.

#### *Branding and Marketing*

As in other industries, shedding some of their capital investments allows hotels to increase their focus on branding and marketing. Hotel guests are no longer paying for just a place to spend the night, instead they are also paying for what the hotel represents: quality of service, amenities, comfort, star level, etc.

Customers become attached to certain brands and seek out the same hotel chain in other cities. According to manager interviews, individual hotels must adopt brand atmosphere and standards, but it is corporate headquarters that market the brand.

As hotels are forced to market themselves in order to be competitive, they compete more on the basis of what amenities they provide for their customers. Coffeemakers, stocked minibars, TVs, toiletries, and other amenities are all extras that customers have come to expect and that housekeepers must clean or resupply. High-end hotels may also offer robes, slippers, large-screen TVs, chocolates on the pillow, etc.

The amenity that has received the most attention is the new luxury bed. The Westin Hotel & Resorts (a Starwood chain), introduced the first branded beds in 1999. According to Andrea Bennett, the travel news writer at *Travel and Leisure*,

The first bed commissioned by a hotel company and given a brand name, the Heavenly Bed was billed as an “oasis for the weary traveler,” and it looked the part: a bright white duvet, a down blanket, five feather-and-down pillows, three 230-thread-count sheets (one sheet is laid over the blanket, a practice known as triple sheeting), and a custom-designed 12 1/2-inch-thick Simmons mattress with 900 individual coils. Within one year, Westin had increased its occupancy rates and had begun the first retail bedding operation of any hotel chain, selling the Heavenly Bed on its Website. To date, 30,000 people have bought merchandise on Westin’s site; 7,000 have bought the entire queen-sized set for \$2,565.<sup>24</sup>

These beds created a new area of competition. One of the managers interviewed stressed the importance of these luxury beds, saying that their beds were an “improvement” on those originated by Westin.

While the new “luxury” beds were installed in all of the hotels at which our respondents worked, the managers uniformly reported that either there have been no problems or all problems have been resolved. For example, one manager described how the new pillow top beds provided an opportunity for management and housekeeping to compromise: “. . . the last thing I want is injured workers and so we put a team together and said, how can we make this bed with as little lifting and moving, what else can we bring into the mix. We came up with a solution together.” Another manager told us that the new Westin “Heavenly Beds” were very important to the guests of the hotel, and injuries were uncommon (one back injury per year).

Managers across the board reported that their workers were well paid, received good benefits, and were an important part of the company. The next section will look at how government data and housekeepers themselves portray their compensation and working conditions.

### **Hotel Housekeepers in San Diego: Government Data and Field Survey**

We combed government data sources for all available information on the hotel industry and particularly housekeepers, which as mentioned is by far the



largest occupation in the industry. Raw data regarding the Occupational Code for Housekeepers within the accommodation industry was extracted from each data source. The data was then imported into statistical analysis software (SPSS) for analysis. The sample size for each data source is listed below:

- U.S. Census Bureau Public Use Micro Sample (PUMS) 2000, (San Diego County):  $n = 247$
- American Community Survey (ACS) 2004, (National):  $n = 504$
- U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey: Annual Social and Economic Survey (ASEC) 2005: (National)  $n = 303$  and (California)  $n = 34$

While the numbers are small, these surveys are of a representative sample of each population. Moreover, they are the best government statistics that exist on housekeeper demographics, benefit receipts, and public assistance. In addition, a dozen government websites offering prefabricated data tables, or the ability to create a table through the online data were utilized. These included sites of local, state, and federal agencies.

#### *Field Survey Methods*

In order to obtain information regarding the working conditions of hotel workers in the San Diego area, we surveyed hotel workers at or near various downtown hotels and at trolley stops. When we began the survey planning in January, we were unsure of how much access we would have to workers, as we did not want to approach them in hotels where we might jeopardize their employment. In March, we discovered that dozens of workers were picketing in front of the MGH where we could have full access to workers.

As a result, our sample is skewed. First of all seventy-eight of the ninety-eight surveyed workers were housekeepers. Therefore, we decided to focus on their situation, as using only twenty cases of various other occupations would not be a sufficient sample.

We do not claim that our survey is representative. Of the seventy-eight housekeepers, only thirteen belonged to a union. This is 17 percent of the sample. While this percentage seems small, it actually significantly overrepresents unionized workers in the San Diego hotel industry. According to UNITE-HERE Local 30, the union represents approximately 11 percent of workers in the full-service industry countywide.

While we compare union and non-union workers, this is particularly problematic. The sample is mainly from two hotels and, therefore, may be biased by the idiosyncrasies of these hotels. Of the sixty-five nonunion housekeepers, fifty-eight are from the MGH. Of the thirteen unionized housekeepers, ten were from the HIOB.

The MGH was built in 1992. It is operated by the Hyatt chain, but the owner Manchester Resorts is the official employer according to Port documents.

The MGH is one of the higher-end and largest hotels in the city. It is a four-star hotel with over 1,600 rooms. Standard rooms are priced at \$195–\$429 and suite prices range from \$600 to \$3,250. Its revenues for 2005, according to data obtained through the Port District, were over \$162 million.

The HIOB is a smaller, older, and lower-category hotel. Global chain Inter-Continental Resorts operates the hotel under an agreement with the property's REIT owner FelCor. Built in 1969, it has 600 rooms with standard rooms renting for \$119–\$199 and suite rents ranging from \$299 to \$499. It is a three-star hotel and had revenues of \$39.6 million according to Port District records.

While the MGH only has 2.7 times as many rooms as the HIOB, its revenues were over four times as much. We would therefore expect wages and benefits at the MGH to be higher than at the HIOB, all other things being equal. On the other hand, we know that unionized workers generally receive higher wages and benefits. As you will see, these factors nearly evened out pay and benefits, except in the area of health care where unionized workers fared better despite the fact that they came from a less profitable hotel.

In terms of our overall statistics, almost all workers were from either a unionized hotel or one of the highest-end hotels in the city. *We, therefore, are confident that the statistics we present in terms of wages, benefits and living conditions are more favorable than the actual situation that most housekeepers face in San Diego. In other words, we believe the statistics in these areas are best-case scenarios.* This is confirmed by the fact that the wages we found are considerably higher than government data sources indicate is the case.

In terms of working conditions and pain, again these are unionized and high-end hotel workers so we might expect this study to underestimate these areas as well. However, the fact that fifty-four of the seventy-eight workers were interviewed during a protest over working conditions cannot be overlooked. *We recognize that this likely skewed results toward more complaints of harder conditions and pain than would otherwise have been obtained.* However, the numbers we found are very much in line with national studies on this subject.

Following is a look at housekeepers in San Diego. For each area, we first present our analysis of government statistics and other relevant sources and then the results of our own field survey. The section ends with a subsection on the MGH. Given that 83 percent of the survey respondents were from the MGH, we felt it was important to tell the workers' story. In order to understand the situation better, we conducted in-depth interviews with two workers and a member of the nonprofit that supported their protest. It should be noted that we did request an interview with management at the MGH but they declined.

### **Demographic Profile: Who Are the Workers?**

*Government Data.* The vast majority of San Diego housekeepers are immigrants, as opposed to their national counterparts. San Diego hotel housekeepers are primarily Mexican women with little formal education and low English-



**Table 2.** Demographic Profile of National and San Diego County Housekeepers

		San Diego County N = 247 (%)	National N = 504 (%)
Sex	Male	10.9	10.5
	Female	89.1	89.5
Age group	15–19	5.3	13.1
	20–24	7.7	11.7
	25–34	28.7	19.8
	35–44	34.0	28.8
	45–64	21.4	23.9
	65+	2.8	2.8
Race/ethnicity	Non-Hispanic white	6.9	47.6
	Non-Hispanic black	5.7	21.4
	Asian/Pacific Islander	10.9	6.5
	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.2	2
	Hispanic, any race	74.5	20.4
	Other	0.8	2
Citizenship	Citizen by birth or naturalization	40.1	81.7
	Noncitizen	59.9	18.3
Place of birth	United States	17.4	72.2
	Philippines	9.3	N/A
	Mexico	63.6	11.3
	Caribbean	N/A	3.8
	South America	N/A	0.8
	Europe	N/A	2.0
	Asia	N/A	6.5
	Central America	4.0	2.6
	Other <sup>1</sup>	5.7	0.8
Ability to speak English (for foreign-born) <sup>2</sup>	Very well	16.8	30.2
	Well	29.9	20.1
	Not well	35.0	35.8
	Does not speak English	18.3	13.2
Educational attainment	Less than high school	64.4	51.6
	High school degree	22.3	33.1
	Vo/Tech/Bus school degree	N/A	6.9
	Some college, no degree	6.9	5.0
	Associate's degree	2.4	1.6
	Bachelors degree and higher	4.0	1.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Public Use Micro Sample from 2000 Census; American Community Survey 2004.

<sup>1</sup>For San Diego County, "Other" includes all areas except the U.S., Mexico, Central America, and the Philippines.

<sup>2</sup>Sample size for San Diego is 197 and for national is 159.

speaking abilities. Table 2 gives a comprehensive view of the workers according to gender, age, race, ethnicity, citizenship, education, and English fluency.

On a national scale, over 70 percent of housekeepers report being born in the U.S. while this figure is less than 20 percent in San Diego. It should be noted that other national data sources on housekeepers show much higher rates of foreign-born, noncitizens, and Hispanic than those in the table.<sup>25</sup> In all sources of nationwide data, however, the majority of housekeepers are non-white and are citizens with a significant minority being foreign-born.

Three-quarters of housekeepers in San Diego identify themselves as Hispanic, of which 88 percent are Mexican. The second largest group (11 percent) identify themselves as Asian and 82 percent of these are Filipino. Also, only about 35 percent of housekeepers have a high school degree. By comparison, 29 percent of persons in San Diego County reported Hispanic/Latino origin in 2004 and 83 percent of people over the age of twenty-five reported having a high school degree.<sup>26</sup> Hence, the San Diego housekeeping population is significantly more Hispanic and less educated than the general San Diego County population. Also, housekeepers are 90 percent female in San Diego and nationally, and San Diego housekeepers are older than their national counterparts.

The subject of worker ethnicity arose in our manager interviews as well. Managers most often use word-of-mouth hiring for back-of-the-house positions. Although one manager insisted that concentration of particular ethnicities in different positions was a matter of personal taste of applicants, employee referral systems are well known for producing “ethnic clumping.”

In terms of family type, San Diego housekeepers are more than twice as likely to be married (64 percent vs. 27 percent) and far less likely to be single mothers (19 percent vs. 50 percent) compared to their national counterparts. In addition, San Diego housekeeper families also tend to be larger than housekeeper families at the national level. Sixty-three percent of housekeepers in San Diego reported having children under the age of eighteen in the household.<sup>27</sup>

*Field Survey.* Our field survey found much the same demographic profile for San Diego housekeepers as that in the government data. In our sample, 96 percent of housekeepers were female with 4 percent (three cases) being male housekeepers, possibly housemen (those who work in housekeeping but restock carts rather than clean rooms). Our entire sample was either Latino (92 percent) or Asian (8 percent). As shown in the government data, Mexico was by far the leading country of birth followed by the Philippines. Figure 1 represents our findings on ethnicity.

In terms of marital status, two-thirds were either married or lived with their partner. However, over 80 percent were supporting children. The average number of children was 2.6. The workers in the survey were older than the statistics for both the U.S. and San Diego. Only 11 percent of the sample were aged below thirty-five, with 70 percent aged from thirty-five to fifty-four.

### *Income and Wages*

*Government Data.* In 1999, 98.8 percent of housekeepers in San Diego reported a personal income of less than \$35,000.<sup>28</sup> The majority, 64 percent, reported working full time (32 hours or more).<sup>29</sup> At the national level, 80.4 percent of housekeepers reported a personal income of \$35,000 or less, with 57 percent reporting full-time employment.<sup>30</sup>

Table 3 displays specific hotel positions and their average pay per hour. As shown in the chart, San Diego consistently pays more than the national average

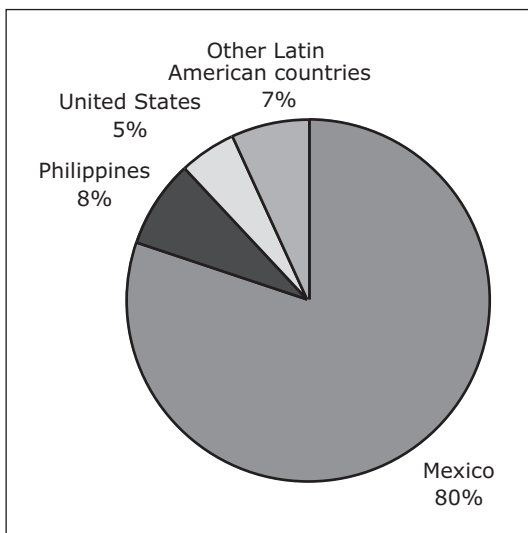


Figure 1. Country of Birth of San Diego Housekeepers, Field Survey.

Table 3. Wages for Hotel Workers: San Diego County and Nationwide, 2004

Position	Median wage: San Diego	Median wage: nationwide
Cooks	9.95	9.47
Food preparation workers	7.98	8.12
Food servers	8.39	8.08
Dishwashers	7.94	7.41
Dining room attendants	7.91	7.17
Housekeeping	8.39	8.17
Janitors	8.86	9.19
First-line managers of housekeeping and janitorial employees	14.79	14.45

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Employment, Hours, and Earnings.

with the exception of food preparation workers and janitors. Housekeeping staff are paid an average of \$0.22 more per hour in San Diego.<sup>31</sup> It is also clear that first-line managers of janitorial and housekeeping staff make far more than the average hotel employee.

At first glance, it seems as if San Diego’s housekeepers are faring better than their national counterparts. Unfortunately, personal income figures do not tell the entire story. According to the Center on Policy Initiatives’ (2005) study, *Making Ends Meet*, a one-adult or two-adult family with two children requires a minimum of \$52,000 per year to meet basic needs in San Diego.<sup>32</sup>

Given the fact that 46 percent of housekeeper families in San Diego have two or more children under the age of eighteen, it is clear that most are living below minimum sustenance levels.<sup>33</sup> Three-quarters report family income below \$50,000.<sup>34</sup> In fact, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 20 percent

of housekeeper families in San Diego are living below the federal poverty line, defined as an income of \$17,029 for a family of four.<sup>35</sup> Clearly, housekeeper families in San Diego are struggling to afford even a basic lifestyle in this prosperous city.

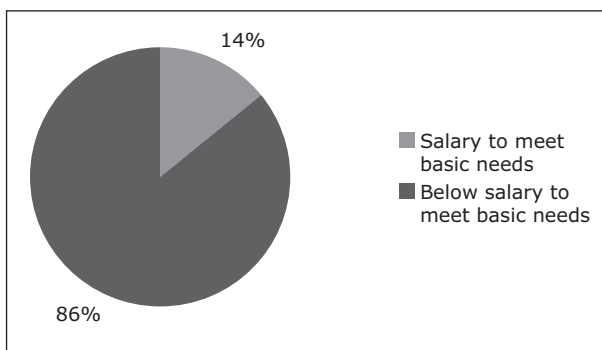
*Field Survey.* The workers in our survey were better paid than the workers in government statistics for housekeepers locally or nationally. As mentioned previously, this is accounted for by the fact that almost all of them worked at a large four-star hotel or a unionized hotel. The median wage in our survey was \$10.63 an hour. There was very little difference between the two groups of workers; as explained in the methodology section, we believe that the fact that the nonunion hotel was newer, larger, higher-end, and had four times the revenues explains why the wages were almost exactly the same as at the unionized hotel. Moreover, the unionized workers' were in the middle of contract negotiations and, in fact, received a retroactive 30¢ pay raise shortly after the surveys. An additional 30¢ was given in May, raising the wage to almost 60¢ above the nonunion workers.

We also did not find a strong correlation between wages and years worked. While everyone's wages were considerably lower when they started, they had risen to a fairly flat level. It appears that wages rise after an initial training period to a fairly standard range. Workers' wages did not appear to rise as much with their time of employment as they did across the board for the entire housekeeping staff. The lowest wage was \$8.50 and the highest \$13.43, despite the fact that 20 percent of the sample had worked as housekeepers for over ten years.

Even though these workers are relatively well paid for housekeepers, very few made enough to meet their basic needs. According to the study by the Center on Policy Initiative, a single adult in San Diego with no dependents needs to make \$12.48 an hour working full-time to cover their basic expenses.<sup>36</sup> Only 12 percent of our sample made this wage or above. However, of these over half supported two children. This leaves only 5 percent of our sample who are, in fact, supporting only themselves on a wage of \$12.48 or more.

Further analysis of the data shows that there are seven additional cases in which the housekeeper was married or living with a partner and their partner worked full-time and they had at most one child to support. All the other two-earner households had at least two children and did not make the \$12.61 necessary to meet the basic needs of a two-adult, two-child family in San Diego. Therefore, only eleven cases out of seventy-eight appear to be making a self-sufficiency wage (Figure 2).

The situation might be improved by tips. But only 53 percent of workers said they received any tips at all and most of these said that it varied and there was no reliable amount. The largest number mentioned—by only one worker—was \$40 a week. The rest ranged down from there. Such small overall tips would not have much impact on the above estimation.



**Figure 2.** Percentage of Workers Making Enough to Cover Basic Needs Wage, Field Survey.

It should also be pointed out that these figures assume workers are working full time; part-time workers would of course be worse off. Slightly over 90 percent of our sample was, in fact, working full-time.

### *Benefits*

*Government Data.* The most important benefit that most workers receive from their employer is health insurance. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that full-time workers are more than five times as likely to have health insurance through their employer than part-time workers (in 2005, 66 percent vs. 12 percent). Unionized workers are also 70 percent more likely to have health insurance through their employer than nonunion workers (83 percent vs. 49 percent in 2005). Among service workers, only 48 percent participate in employer-sponsored health insurance as opposed to 70 percent of goods-producing workers.<sup>37</sup>

Company size also has a significant effect on employee health coverage. In 2005, 65 percent of workers in businesses with 100 or more employees had health coverage through their employer as opposed to 43 percent of workers in smaller businesses.<sup>38</sup> Also, it may be that employers offer health insurance but at rates that workers cannot afford. In 2005, the average monthly employee contribution for an individual health-care plan was \$68.96, and for a family plan it was \$273.<sup>39</sup>

California housekeepers actually participate in employer-sponsored health insurance at a slightly lower rate than private-sector employees in general, 50 percent versus 53 percent.<sup>40</sup> However, they are far above their national counterparts as can be seen in Table 4. A small part of this difference can be explained by the fact that California housekeepers are slightly more likely to work full-time, as discussed earlier. In most cases, the employer or union covered a portion of the health insurance premiums.

*Field Survey.* In our survey, we found much higher rates of health coverage for both workers and their families. This is almost surely because workers came

**Table 4.** Medical Benefits for Housekeepers National and California, 2005

Benefit	Housekeepers in California (%)	Housekeepers nationwide (%)
Health Insurance	64.7	50.8
Participating in employer-sponsored health insurance (or through union)	50	35
Employer of union pays insurance	0	5.9
Employer or union pays part of insurance	41.2	26.1

Source: ASEC 2005.

from very large and/or unionized employers which are more likely to offer medical insurance, as discussed. Almost all employees stated that they have health insurance. The vast majority stated that they receive health insurance from their employer. Of those who responded to receiving health insurance from their employer, about half have coverage for their families. The monthly premiums vary, from \$14 to \$300, with the average monthly cost of the premium being \$81.55 (Table 5). Those with insurance that is not covered by the employer mostly stated that they do not receive insurance from their employer because it is too expensive and generally receive their insurance from Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, or their spouse (about 10 percent of those surveyed).

Comparing union and nonunion workers, we see that the unionized workers were more likely to have health insurance, but less likely to get it through their employer. However, they obviously had an alternative source of coverage because all were insured. Also, premiums were lower for union workers even though the insurance was more likely to cover their family. The average monthly payment for union workers was just over one-third of those for nonunion housekeepers.

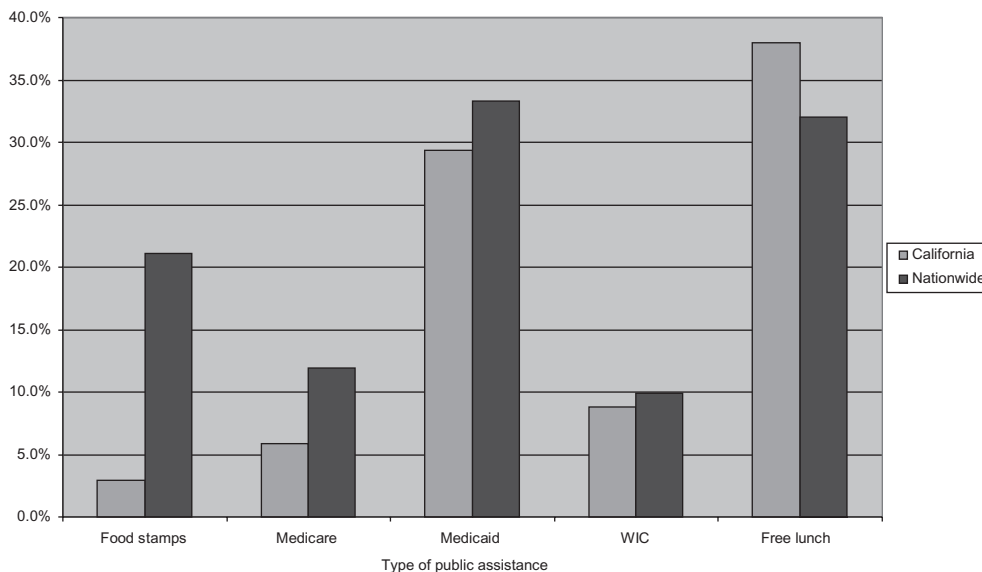
Again, because of the nature of the hotels where almost all surveyed housekeepers worked (either over 1,000 employees or unionized) almost all employees received paid time off and there was little difference between the two groups. Over 90 percent of respondents received paid sick, vacation, and holidays.

Although workers received all paid days, they were not always able to avail themselves of these benefits. Some workers commented on how managers make it difficult for workers to utilize their days off. One worker mentioned how understaffing interfered with her vacation. "I took a five day vacation and they called me last night to see if I can come back because they need me."

**Table 5.** Health Insurance Coverage Among Field Survey Respondents

Benefit	Overall	Union	Nonunion
Has health insurance	93%	100%	92%
Participates through employer	87%	77%	90%
Family coverage	51%	73%	46%
Average monthly premium	\$81.55	\$32	\$89





**Figure 3.** Use of Public Assistance by Housekeepers: California Versus the Nation.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Current Population Survey: Annual Social and Economic Survey (ASEC), 2005.

### Public Assistance

*Government Data.* Because most housekeepers’ salaries do not cover basic needs, many rely on some form of public assistance to help their families survive. Figure 3 shows housekeepers’ receipt of public assistance for themselves and their families nationally and in California, according to ASEC data.

This is a conservative estimate as the ACS shows much higher receipts among housekeepers nationally for the few programs it covers. Except for school lunches, California housekeepers and their families are less likely to receive public assistance than their national counterparts. This can be partially explained by their immigrant status and how eligibility for such benefits is determined.

Nationally, 48.5 percent of housekeepers received at least one type of assistance mentioned in the figure and 55.8 percent said they received some form of public assistance. In California, 53 percent received at least one form of the listed services, while 59 percent stated that they received some form of assistance.

*Field Survey.* We found similar numbers in our own survey. However, in our survey not many of the housekeepers were willing to answer questions about public assistance. The public assistance programs we asked about are: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TANF/AFDC), food stamps, Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Section 8 Housing, subsidized housing, Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, and free school

lunches. Of the seventy-eight total respondents we surveyed, only thirty-three answered any of this set of questions. Of these, 48.5 percent received some type of public assistance (because forty-five people did not answer, this is only 21 percent of the whole sample). The first figure is exactly the same as the national figure from ASEC for these benefits.

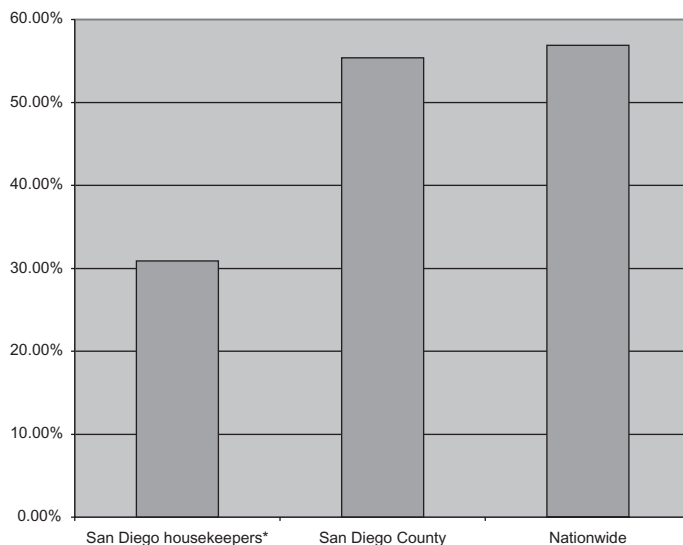
The types of assistance most utilized are Medi-Cal and WIC and the least utilized are food stamps, Section 8 Housing, and subsidized housing. Again, this may reflect eligibility requirements and immigration status. Respondents were clearly hesitant to answer these questions. This is true for government surveys as well.<sup>41</sup> One explanation may be that it is looked down upon in the Latino culture to receive public assistance. Moreover, immigrants are often maligned by the broader society for taking public assistance.

### *Housing*

*Government Data.* The San Diego housing market is among the highest in the nation. In January 2006, the median home price in San Diego was \$508,000.<sup>42</sup> Figure 4 shows the breakdown of home ownership for housekeepers versus nonhousekeepers in 2000.

Housekeepers in San Diego have just over 50 percent of the rate of home ownership as other residents of the county and of the country.

San Diego housekeepers are also paying significantly more for their housing in comparison to their national counterparts. The average monthly housing costs for the country were \$485 while for San Diego it was \$815.



**Figure 4.** Home Ownership Percentage, 2000.

\*Reflects home ownership by the housekeeper or a member of the household.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau State & County QuickFacts and U.S. Census Bureau PUMS 2000.

The high cost of housing is forcing many San Diego housekeeper families to squeeze into smaller accommodations despite the fact that their family size is traditionally larger. Over three-quarters of housekeepers report the number of bedrooms in their homes as two or fewer despite the fact that 11 percent of San Diego housekeepers report the presence of more than one family in the home.<sup>43</sup> The conclusion is that housekeeper families in San Diego are living in cramped quarters and are spending a large portion of their earnings to merely put a roof over their heads.

*Field Survey.* We found a slightly higher rate of home ownership than the government statistics show for housekeepers in San Diego, reflecting the higher wages of this sample. Still, homeownership lags far behind the rate for San Diego residents in general (37 percent compared to 55 percent). The average household payment (rent or mortgage) was \$997, with payments for the 61 percent who rent averaging \$830.

Housekeepers, as expected, lived in small homes, with 64 percent of the surveyed housekeepers having two bedrooms or less. Moreover, housekeepers had to share their space with large numbers of people. As was found in government statistics on San Diego, 11 percent of our sample had more than one family living in a household. Moreover, when comparing the number of bedrooms to the number of household residents, most housekeepers had multiple residents in every bedroom. Also, 73 percent of those surveyed have at least one child living in their household, with a third having three or more children in the home.

While not giving a residence in Tijuana, several housekeepers expressed that they live at least part time on the other side of the border, sometimes going back on days off to be with their children. Manager interviews confirmed this trend saying that as much as 20 percent of their workforce lives in Tijuana. Two hotels mentioned offering Mexican health-care insurance.

### *Transportation*

*Government Data.* More than one-third of San Diego housekeepers reported using some form of public transportation to get to work.<sup>44</sup> The mean commute time to work reported by workers in San Diego was 25.3 minutes in 2000.<sup>45</sup> For housekeepers, the average commute time was twenty-seven minutes each way.<sup>46</sup> This was 30 percent longer than their national counterparts who commuted nineteen minutes each way on average.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, almost half of San Diego housekeepers commuted upwards of thirty minutes each way to work.

*Field Survey.* The average commute time in our field survey was thirty-eight minutes, considerably higher than that found in government statistics for housekeepers and for San Diego residents in general. In terms of mode of transportation, while 26 percent of those surveyed commute by car, 64 percent of participants stated that they rely on public transportation, and the other 10 percent walk, bike, or carpool.

*Health and Safety*

*Government Data and Published Reports.* Hotel work, while not the most dangerous, has higher rates of injury nationwide than other service sectors, particularly for housekeepers. According to an analysis based on eighty-seven unionized hotels nationwide, there is a 61 percent higher risk of injury to housekeepers than any other hotel employee. Moreover, hotels have a higher rate of workplace injury than the service sector in general, 5.9 percent compared to 4.2 percent.<sup>48</sup>

A separate data set analyzed by the same study profiled the types of injuries and illnesses suffered by 3,716 hotel housekeepers at 102 unionized hotels over a two-year period (2002–2004). The most common types of injuries sustained by these employees are sprains and strains. The body part most often injured is the back.<sup>49</sup>

The combination of increased room amenities and understaffing leads to poor working conditions for hotel housekeepers.<sup>50</sup> The numbers of housemen, those who supply clean linen to housekeepers and help with other heavy tasks, was cut by 33 percent between 1999 and 2003 and many of their duties have been shifted to housekeepers.<sup>51</sup> Increased room amenities include the introduction of luxury beds, as discussed in the previous section. These beds exceed the National Institute Occupational Safety and Health's safe lifting index because of the weight of the mattress and low positioning of the bed.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the addition of duvet covers, more pillows (five to six), and more sheets (three) means that changing beds takes up more of a housekeepers' workday. Even if it takes a housekeeper only twelve minutes to change all of these and she changes only fifteen beds a day, three hours are spent on the task. The *New York Times* reported that many housekeepers are changing twenty-five beds and thus spending four to five hours on the task, lifting mattresses 150 to 200 times a day.<sup>53</sup>

Because of these conditions, there is a high incidence of work-related pain. The study mentioned also compiled three different surveys of housekeepers conducted in major cities across America and Canada including Boston, Los Angeles, Toronto, Las Vegas, and San Francisco. According to these surveys, the percentage of hotel housekeepers who experienced workplace pain range from 77 percent to 91 percent.<sup>54</sup> Of the hotel housekeepers who reported pain, 65 percent took pain medication and over 60 percent visited a doctor.<sup>55</sup>

*Field Survey.* In our survey, we also found high levels of injury and pain. Forty-six percent of respondents stated that they had been hurt at least once while working at a hotel. The most frequent injury reported was to the back, followed by the arms. Sixty-four percent of the respondents who had been hurt on the job did not take time off. Of these employees, 56 percent responded that they had received worker's compensation while the remainder did not. Ninety-four percent of those that were hurt at their job reported the incident to the hotel and 88 percent reported seeing a doctor for the injury. Eighty percent said the doctor

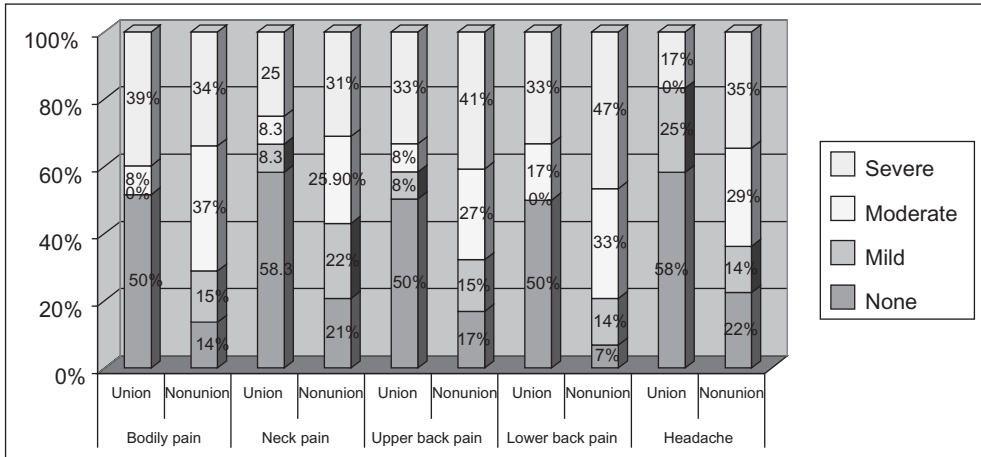


Figure 5. Survey Respondents That Experienced Pain Related to Their Work in the Last Four Weeks, Union Versus Nonunion.

visit was covered by their job. Unionized housekeepers were less likely to be hurt on the job with 38.5 percent responding that they had been hurt as opposed 48.4 percent of nonunion workers.

When asked if they had experienced pain in the last four weeks that they believed was related to their jobs, almost all workers responded that they had some pain with over half experiencing severe pain in some area of their body. Our survey results were very similar to those referenced above. Overall, 88.5 percent of respondents experienced at least mild pain in some area of their body, while 83.3 percent experienced at least moderate pain somewhere, and 53.9 percent experienced severe pain. Figure 5 shows the distribution and kinds of pain experienced by the workers in specific areas of the body.

While most of the housekeepers experienced pain, the nonunionized housekeepers were significantly more likely to experience it. At least half of the union workers experienced no pain in each of the areas (bodily, neck, upper or lower back, or headaches). More than half of the nonunion workers experience moderate or severe pain in each of these categories.

### Changing Working Conditions

*Field Survey.* Most of those surveyed found their work harder than when they began working as housekeepers. Table 6 shows the specific tasks and the response of union and nonunion workers as to questions of whether these tasks have changed in nature.

As noted above, both union and nonunion housekeepers say that cleaning beds has become more difficult since when they began their jobs. The housekeepers state that this task is harder because of the increased number of sheets and pillows on the bed as well as a heavier mattress. The housekeepers who feel

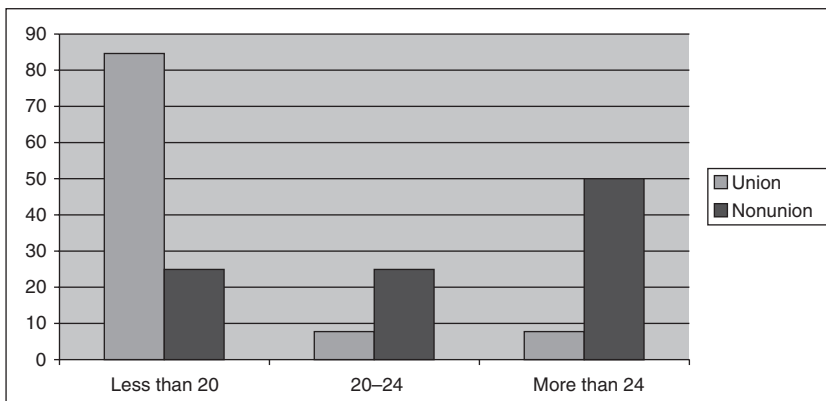
**Table 6.** Union and Nonunion Workers' Increased Difficulty of Specific Work Tasks, Field Survey

Task	Union	Nonunion
<i>Beds</i>		
Harder	58.3	71.7
Easier	0.0	8.3
Same	41.7	20.0
<i>Bathrooms</i>		
Harder	50.0	55.0
Easier	0.0	8.3
Same	50.0	36.7
<i>Vacuuming</i>		
Harder	23.1	30.0
Easier	15.4	6.7
Same	61.5	63.3

that cleaning bathrooms is harder say that it is because there are more bathrooms to clean and the bathrooms are dirtier. Most thought that vacuuming had remained the same.

In terms of changing conditions, the biggest complaint for nonunion workers was not the particular tasks but the number of rooms they are required to clean each day. This could certainly have affected the answers shown above. Although clearly most understood the question to be about the nature of tasks and not the number of repetitions, as they did not answer uniformly across respondents or tasks despite the fact that most were interviewed while protesting the increased room number. Figure 6 shows the average number of rooms cleaned by the unionized and nonunionized workers surveyed.

Almost 85 percent of nonunion housekeepers are cleaning fewer than twenty rooms per day. Half of nonunion housekeepers are cleaning more than twenty-four rooms per day. This is largely because of the skewed nature of the sample as described above. However, we do not think union workers would be vulnerable to this kind of workload increase. In fact, at the Hyatt Islandia—the only

**Figure 6.** Average Number of Rooms Cleaned Per Day, Field Survey.



unionized Hyatt in San Diego—the contract specifies the maximum number of rooms that can be assigned. While this varies between eleven and fifteen depending on the area of the hotel, it never rises above fifteen. Moreover, if workers clean ten checkouts in one day (as opposed to stayovers, which are cleaned less thoroughly) their load is reduced by one room. It is also reduced if they have to clean rooms on more than two floors or in different parts of the hotel as it takes extra time to move between areas. Furthermore, numbers are reduced during summertime. The new HIOB contract drops the maximum number of rooms from sixteen to fifteen, with twelve checkouts resulting in an additional reduction of one room.

*The Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel and the Thirty-Room Policy*

Both the additional amenities and the increased number of rooms assigned results in increased workloads for housekeepers. In January 2006, management at the MGH, a nonunionized hotel in downtown San Diego implemented a new program in which the number of rooms that housekeepers in the hotel cleaned per day would increase from sixteen to as many as thirty rooms. Under the new policy, each housekeeper must clean rooms that total fifteen credits per day. A “checkout” room is worth one credit. A “stayover” room is worth half of a credit. Therefore, depending on the combination assigned, room numbers fluctuate with the outer limits being fifteen and thirty.

Under the program outline, a “stayover” is not to be cleaned as thoroughly as a “check-out,” in which the hotel is preparing for a new guest. Below is a list from the Hyatt training materials of tasks to be completed during a “stayover.”

*Bathroom*

- Clean Sink and Counter
- Clean toilet
- Wipe down bathtub, shower wall and shower liner
- Replace or re-hang/refold towels
- Fold toilet paper
- Empty trash *if needed*
- Replenish amenities *if needed*
- Wipe mirror *if needed*
- Mop floor *if needed*
- Replace glassware *if needed*

*Closet*

- Replenish amenities *if needed*
- Wipe mirror *if needed*
- Organize iron and ironing board *if needed*

*Bedroom*

- Remake Beds
- Spray air freshener
- Empty trash *if needed*
- Straighten signage *if needed*
- Replace amenities *if needed*
- Empty and clean ashtray *if needed*
- Replenish glassware *if needed*
- Vacuum *if needed*
- Dust *if needed*

*Coffee Stations*

- Replace coffee mugs *if needed*
- Dry or clean coffee pot *if needed*
- Replenish coffee and condiments *if needed*
- Wipe coffee station *if needed*

All of this is to be done in fifteen minutes or less. "If needed" tasks are left to the housekeepers' discretion. However, if an area is dirty or the amenities used or a guest makes a request, such as having the bathroom floor mopped, the housekeeper must complete the task. She may be able to get a full credit if enough tasks must be done but needs to wait for a supervisor's approval, which can take up to half an hour to receive. For checkouts, all the tasks must be completed and the sheets must be changed in a thirty-minute time frame.

According to the MGH management, although the housekeepers have more rooms to clean, they actually have less work to do as most rooms are not being cleaned as thoroughly. The housekeepers experience the change differently.

### **A Housekeeper's Workday**

An in-depth interview with Margarita clearly illustrates some of the issues that have arisen from the policy change, as well as providing a walk through one housekeeper's workday. Margarita leaves her house at 6:45 a.m. to go to work. It takes her forty-five minutes one way on a bus and a trolley to arrive at the MGH Hotel. She arrives at work at 7:30 a.m. and changes into her work uniform. At 8 a.m., she enters a debriefing meeting for the day along with the other housekeepers. She begins cleaning rooms at 8:15 a.m.

For a checkout, she begins by changing the sheets and pillowcases and cleaning out the trash. She then enters the bathroom and scrubs the toilet, the sink, the bathtub, and the floor. Margarita changes the towels in the bathroom, then mops the floor. Once the bathroom floor has dried, she must vacuum it to ensure that any hair or dust is removed. She finishes the room by dusting the furniture, windows, and vacuuming the bedroom rug. She also replaces amenities. When rooms need more attention, Margarita will often skip her ten-minute break in the morning. She does not want to skip it but feels pressure from the managers to complete her assigned rooms for the day, although it is extremely difficult for her. Sometimes, the only rest that she has is her thirty-minute lunch and her ten-minute break in the afternoon, which the Hyatt is required by law to give to its housekeepers.

Margarita tries to clean as many of her assigned rooms as possible during the morning. She finds that her body becomes very tired in the afternoon because of the workload. At the end of the day, she must fill her cart with supplies to clean rooms the following day. If she finishes her room cleaning before the end of her workday, at 4:10 p.m., she takes her morning break and afternoon break if she has skipped one of these in order to ensure the completion of her quota.

Margarita, who has been working as a housekeeper for twenty years, cleaned sixteen rooms a day before the room increase. She says that until the new room policy, she cleaned rooms as if they were a "checkout" every day. Since "stay-

over” rooms are cleaned much less, rooms are much more difficult to clean when the guests do check out. A great deal of dust and dirt accumulates, adding to the amount of time needed to clean the room. She is often unable to finish the number of rooms assigned to her. At this point, she has received verbal reprimands from the management; however, Margarita fears that the Hyatt may begin issuing demerits soon.

Margarita asserts that many “stayover” guests complain that their sheets are not changed daily and so, sometimes the housekeepers do more. Sometimes, the guest speaks directly to the housekeeping department or management. Margarita argues that the managers blame the housekeepers by saying, “maybe she forgot” or “I’ll speak with her.” They do not explain the room change policy. Margarita “hates” this because she believes that the guests think that she is not doing her job correctly when she sees them again. In addition, Margarita says that because the rooms are not as clean, her tips have been affected. Before the room increase, she often received a \$5 tip. Now, she sometimes receives \$1–\$2 dollar tips and, frequently, she does not receive any tips at all for several weeks.

Margarita says that more women are hurting themselves since the room increase because they are rushing to finish their assignments during their eight-hour shifts. This causes the housekeepers a great deal of stress. Margarita has suffered from tendonitis twice during her employment at the MGH. Her hands and arms are constantly inflamed. Her lower back is in persistent pain as her duties as a housekeeper require her to bend down continuously throughout the day (for instance, changing beds and vacuuming). She uses home remedies to help soothe the pain. “They [The Hyatt Hotel] are physically killing us,” Margarita says.

Margarita would like to return to cleaning sixteen rooms a day. She believes that it would also make the other housekeepers happier and that it would better service the guests. Margarita says about the room change, “It’s unjust. I see it as being unjust.”

Margarita’s experience points to numerous problems with the thirty-day policy: stayovers often take more time if dirty or if a guest complains; checkouts take more time because they are now dirtier than when they were cleaned daily; tips are down and pain and injuries are up; and housekeepers feel frustrated at their inability to do their job well.

In October, when the new program was announced, some housekeepers from the MGH approached La Raza Rights Coalition (LRRC) in order to protest the room change. Housekeepers and members of the coalition formed a committee called Hyatt Housekeepers United for Our Rights. In February, they began picketing outside of the MGH after work for thirty days to protest the increase to thirty rooms. Management requested that the housekeepers stop protesting and promised to make attempts to come to a resolution with the housekeepers. A six-hour meeting took place during which nothing was resolved. According to a representative of LRRC, the situation is at a stalemate.

## Conclusion

The San Diego hotel industry is a profitable and growing business. Much of this expansion is slated to take place on public land or within redevelopment zones that offer hotel developers and owners a variety of benefits. In fact, next door to the Holiday Inn is the Port's Lane Field, for which Manchester Resorts and the Viejas Tribe are jointly negotiating the rights. A couple of weeks after the thirty-day picket in front of his current hotel ended, Manchester was selected by the navy to develop another area by the bay known as the Broadway Complex. Both sites are among the best pieces of real estate remaining to be developed in the region. As the Port Chairman said of Lane Field in an interview with the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, "The land belongs to the people of California, so we want to do what's best for the people of California."<sup>56</sup> The people of California include the housekeepers and other hotel workers who work long, hard hours contributing to these profitable enterprises.

The vast majority of housekeepers in San Diego do not make enough money to cover their basic needs. As a consequence of low pay, housekeepers and their families have to rent more often, crowd into smaller quarters and commute further than other workers in the county. Half of them also rely on some form of public assistance to help them survive.

Aside from financial well-being, it is clear that housekeepers' physical well-being is being greatly compromised. Reports from around the country based on hotel injury logs and federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) data show that hotel housekeepers are experiencing high levels of injury and pain. Studies attribute growing physical problems to new luxury beds, which are heavier and require more pillows, sheets, and accessories to be changed. These new beds are now commonplace in higher-end hotels.

Our study found that increased room assignments also contributed to rising physical problems among housekeepers. The case of the MGH in San Diego clearly illustrates the vulnerability that nonunion workers face in this arena, as they are not protected by a contract that regulates workload issues. Management claims that workloads are not increasing, despite more rooms being assigned to each housekeeper, because workers are being asked to clean less in each room. However, a close examination reveals that housekeepers are required to complete between seven and twenty-six tasks in each room often in a fifteen-minute period. This gives housekeepers between thirty-five seconds and 2.2 minutes to complete each task. For checkouts, housekeepers must complete all twenty-six tasks in a thirty-minute period, and change the bedclothes, giving only about one minute per task. Furthermore, the fact that they may have to repeat these tasks up to thirty times a day makes clear why workers are complaining of high levels of stress, injury, and pain.

What this article makes clear is that the profits of the industry are coming, at least in part, at the expense of hotel workers' financial and physical well-being. As a group, San Diego housekeepers are not paid a sustainable wage and their health is in jeopardy. Despite the fact that San Diego is among the top markets

in an industry that has seen extraordinary growth in the past two years, working conditions for many hotel workers are deteriorating.

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## Notes

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