



www.springfieldnooneleaves.org – 413-342-1804 – nooneleavesspringfield@gmail.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monday August 22nd, 2011

Contact: Malcolm Chu 413-342-1804, nooneleavesspringfield@gmail.com

Springfield City Council unanimously approves strongest anti-foreclosure legislation in the country. SPRINGFIELD, MA Tonight, before a large crowd of residents and supporters, the Springfield City Council unanimously passed groundbreaking legislation that will lessen the affect of the foreclosure crisis on the city, begin to hold the big banks accountable for the impacts of the foreclosure crisis and force the big banks to pay for the crisis they created. The vote comes following months of organizing efforts by residents and a unique collaboration between city councilors who authored the bill and community organizations. After the vote, supporters exited the council chambers to a booming chant of “What do we do when the banks attack? Stand up, fight back!”

“By passing this ordinance, the city of Springfield has created powerful financial incentives for banks to negotiate with homeowners prior to foreclosing and to avoid vacant homes that destroy neighborhoods after foreclosure,” explains David Dunwell of the Springfield Bank Tenant Association (BTA).

The legislation places Springfield as a leader against the foreclosure crisis, and perhaps more importantly, serves as a model for other cities across the nation. Specifically, the ordinance creates a city-run mandatory mediation program that includes maximum daily fines for banks that fail to comply and potential criminal charges. It also imposes a \$10,000 cash bond to be assessed upon banks filing the petition to foreclose, to secure and maintain vacant homes after foreclosure. The ordinance could also generate significant revenue for the city to help close budget gaps left in the wake of the recession created in large part by Wall Street speculation and lending practices.

“The big banks caused the worst recession of our lifetime, yet they continue to make record profits while we lose our homes and our jobs,” said BTA Leader Sellou Diaite. “We hope the legislation passed by the city council will serve as a model for cities across the country and be a major step forward in holding the banks financially accountable for the foreclosure crisis they created.”

Since the foreclosure crisis began in 2008 wall street banks have spent billions of dollars lobbying against new bank regulations and been largely spared by efforts state and national efforts to solve the foreclosure crisis despite a massive revenue crisis, high unemployment and over 14 million families who are underwater on their mortgage and at risk of losing their homes. These same banks have largely refused to do principal reduction in loan modifications despite being bailed out by the federal government, as well as overwhelming evidence that principal reduction is good for the banks, the consumer and the economy.

Following the vote, the Springfield No One Leaves/Nadie Se Mude Coalition rallied in front of city hall celebrating months of organizing efforts by residents. They were joined by the lead sponsor of the ordinance—Councilor Amaad Rivera, Councilor Mike Fenton, SEIU Community Action and locals 509, 615, 1199, the American Friends Service Committee, Arise for Social Justice, Western Mass Jobs W/ Justice, UAW 2322, and the Mass Alliance Against Predatory Lending. The supporters chanted “When we fight, we win!”

Candejah Pink, who emceed the rally, closed the rally by urging supporters to continue to stand up and fight back against no-fault evictions being carried out by the banks after foreclosure.

###