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Photos and Broadcast Quality Video Available Shortly at www.SpringfieldNoOneLeaves.org

350 Foreclosed Families & Allies shut down Downtown Springfield & 15 Arrested Occupying Downtown Bank of America Branch

SPRINGFIELD, MA – 15 Protesters were arrested today in Springfield when they sat-in and occupied the downtown branch of Bank of America. Protesters sat-in and occupied the branch office solidarity with hundreds of families from throughout New England fighting foreclosure and eviction. 350 people took the streets leading up to the sit-in from throughout New England, shutting down Boland Way and part of Main Street downtown. Marchers included many families who are fighting foreclosure and eviction against Bank of America and other Wall Street banks.

“I sat-in today at Bank of America because we are fed up with banks who care more about making profit than keeping our communities safe,” said Springfield resident Jasmin Torrejon who was arrested at Bank of America today. “Millions of people are being thrown out of their homes because of the mess that Wall Street Banks created leaving our neighborhoods destroyed. Yet it’s the banks who are now rewarded with billions in tax refunds. We’re fighting back!”

Today’s march and sit-in signal growing outrage toward the mortgage crisis and Wall Street banks that continues to spread throughout the country including to mid-size cities like Springfield. With 595 foreclosures in 2010, Springfield had the highest rate of foreclosures in Massachusetts last year. About 350 people gathered in front of vacant and foreclosed houses in the South End near Morris and Central streets. The protesters then took to the streets marching on either side of Main Street.

“I marched on the Wall Street Banks today and Bank of America so that my neighbors and I can stay in our homes,” said Sellou Diaite whose home was foreclosed by Bank of America on November 9th, 2011, despite her ability to afford the house at its current market value – nearly half of the principal balance. “We are demanding that the Wall Street banks stop all no-fault evictions after foreclosure and reduce principal to current value.”

August 2010 marked the largest monthly increase since August 2007, right after the housing bubble burst. According to the Warren Group CEO, Timothy M. Warren Jr., recent increases in activity, “indicates banks are moving more aggressively against borrowers.”

“Across the country, predatory lending practices, the housing bubble created by the Wall Street banks, and the crash of that housing bubble are destroying our communities, causing alarming rates of unemployment and homelessness. Often, its communities of color and working class communities that have been hit the worst,” says David Dunwell, a Springfield Bank Tenant Member fighting an eviction by Fannie Mae. “But it’s our communities getting hit the hardest that organized today to take the fight to the Wall Street Banks!”

Monday’s actions were organized by Springfield No One Leaves/Nadie Se Mude and the New England Bank Tenant Alliance.