

Local 5 workers picket Waikiki hotels, plan strike vote as bargaining grows tense

By [Allison Schaefer](#)

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More than a hundred Local 5 members gathered Tuesday in the lobby at Hilton Hawaiian Village to demonstrate and picket through Waikiki for new contracts, which expired June 30.





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Local 5 workers picket Waikiki hotels

Nearly 1,000 Unite Here Local 5 union workers picketed in front of major Waikiki hotels Tuesday demanding new contracts that provide “living wages, fair workloads, and proper staffing that ensures quality service.”

The pickets took place at the Sheraton Waikiki, Royal Hawaiian, Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa, Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa and Hilton Hawaiian Village, where more than 100 red-shirted workers walked through the lobby, some yelling into megaphones and pumping their fists.

Local 5 officials said a strike vote will be held Aug. 8, and if workers vote to authorize a strike, it could be held anytime.

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Bargaining began in April between Local 5 and Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Hyatt Hotels & Resorts, Kyo-ya Hotels & Resorts and Marriott International. Since then union contracts covering over 4,800 Hawaii hotel workers represented by Local 5 on Oahu, Kauai and Maui expired June 30, with six more contracts covering over 1,000 workers set to expire soon.

The Waikiki picketing coincided with actions from thousands of other Unite Here hotel workers in cities across the U.S. and Canada, where bargaining is ongoing with Hilton, Hyatt and Marriott.

“Tourism is Hawaii’s number one industry, but the people that work in it can’t afford to live in Hawaii,” said Wendy Perez, a guest service agent at the Waikiki Beach Marriott, in a statement.

Local 5 said Hawaii hotels have seen the average daily rate of a hotel room increase by 33% and revenue per available room increase by 23% in 2023 compared with 2019.

Cade Watanabe, financial secretary treasurer of Local 5, said in a statement, “Will Hawaii continue to be a premier tourist destination or not? We won’t let our mainland owners destroy our industry by depriving us of the respect and staffing we need to ensure the quality of service and guest experience our island visitors have come to expect.”

Michael D’Angelo, head of labor relations-Americas, Hyatt, said in an email, “Our purpose is to care for people so they can be their best. Our colleagues are the heart of our business, and their well being is always a top priority. Hyatt has a long history of cooperation with the unions that represent our employees, including UNITE HERE Local 5.”

“Under recent collective bargaining agreements with UNITE HERE, Hyatt hotels continue to offer our eligible employees competitive wages and benefits, as well as comprehensive healthcare coverage,” D’Angelo said. “We look forward to continuing to negotiate a fair contract with UNITE HERE Local 5 and recognize the contributions of our employees.”

Hilton, Marriott and Kyo-ya did not immediately respond to a request for comment.





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