UNITE HERE Local 34’s Executive Board is proud to endorse Erick Russell for Treasurer and Maritza Bond for Secretary of State.

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UNITE HERE Local 34 represents the clerical and technical workers at Yale university. Our members work as administrative assistants, lab technicians, grounds keepers, seamstresses, stage hands, museum techs, IT professionals and more. Since 1983 Local 34 has fought for working people and the New Haven community. Solidarity with the New Haven community is written into the founding documents of our union. The members of Local 34’s Executive Board are excited that during this electoral cycle, we can elect two New Haven residents who grew up here and understand the challenges of New Haven's working families.

Erick Russell spent much of his youth in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven where he helped his parents run their deli on Congress Avenue. He was the first person in his family to graduate from college, and then went onto law school. If elected, he will be the first Black openly LGBTQ statewide elected official in the country. In New Haven, he served on the New Haven Democratic Town Committee as co-chair for Ward 6 with retired Local 34 member and former Alder Dolores Colon. While we negotiated fair contracts, he stood alongside us as we fought for good pay, affordable healthcare, and a retirement with dignity. When we pushed for local hiring, he knocked on doors and helped organize the community as we called on Yale to be a better partner to New Haven. With the support of community leaders like Erick, we have pushed Yale to give hundreds of residents from low-income neighborhoods fair opportunities to get good union jobs at the University. As Treasurer Erick will be a trustworthy custodian of workers’ pensions, while fighting for workers and furthering Connecticut’s commitment to ethical investments on the environment and human rights.

Local 34 Vice President Elia Vollano said, “Erick clearly understands the struggles of working families, and his commitment to standing with workers made him standout among the candidates seeking the office of Treasurer. We are proud to join other labor and community organizations in supporting Erick for Treasurer.”

A longtime resident of New Haven, Maritza grew up in the Fair Haven neighborhood. As the Director of Health for the City of New Haven, Maritza stewarded health policy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her leadership gave New Haven’s most vulnerable residents the resources to protect themselves from infection. We partnered with her office to distribute test kits, N-95 masks and signed people up for vaccines when they became available. UNITE HERE is a national force in mobilizing working people to participate in elections, and our union knows the importance of good electoral laws that give working people opportunities to participate in democracy. Maritza will fight to protect the right to vote and work with election officials to make it easier to cast a ballot. In a moment, when there is a national movement seeking to disenfranchise voters, Connecticut needs a Secretary of State who will stand up for working people who are often the targets of disenfranchisement.

Local 34 Vice President Elia Vollano said, “Working people need a bigger voice in our elections. Maritiza cares about working families and it isn’t a surprise that she is backed by labor. Our state can trust that Maritiza will make sure elections are accessible and fair.”

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