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O'Malley Campaign Receives Momentum-Building Endorsement *1199 SEIU Says "Maryland Needs Martin O'Malley"*

BALTIMORE, MD (October 17, 2005) – Martin O'Malley's gubernatorial campaign received a major endorsement today, as members of 1199 SEIU rallied around Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley and awarded him the first union endorsement of the 2006 race for Governor.

Speaking to more than 100 members of the health care workers union, O'Malley promised to be a governor "who will make health care more affordable for Marylanders, who will make Maryland a fair state for people who work hard and play by the rules, who will make Maryland a stronger state, a state where all of our families can do better."

Before he spoke, O'Malley was introduced by Bea Tucker, a 34-year-veteran of the union. Citing the lack of progress the Bush and Ehrlich administrations have made on issues affecting working families, Tucker said, "We can do better, and I know that help is on the way with Martin O'Malley." Other speakers included the union's Executive Vice President John Reid and their Assistant Division Director Bob Moore. The Baltimore City College Band also performed.

In accepting the endorsement, O'Malley reflected on the problems in access to health care in Maryland: "How sad is it for us as a country that shahs and sheiks and kings and queens fly from all over the planet to receive the best health care in the world here in our city," yet many Maryland families live each day without even basic health care. "That's not right. We're stronger than that."

As one of the largest and most politically-sophisticated unions in the country, 1199 SEIU's endorsement is an important momentum-building step for O'Malley. It is also significant in that it is early in a race to receive this type of strong organizational backing.

One 1199 member noted, "This is not just an endorsement in words," and Tucker encouraged her fellow union members to begin "hitting the streets, knocking on doors, and hitting the phones."

O'Malley's endorsement follows a weekend of hard campaigning throughout the state, including stops at the Morgan State University Homecoming game and a reception in Montgomery County with over activists from the Indian Community.

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