

WWD

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Bloomingdale's 59th St. Workers OK Pact

NEW YORK — The 2,000 workers at Bloomingdale's 59th Street flagship voted in favor of a new five-year union contract with the store that opens the way for a general wage increase, more health care options and more flexibility when it comes to scheduling hours.

Workers at the store will get a \$3.05 an hour pay hike over the life of the contract, which was ratified by Local 3 United Storeworkers of the Retail, Wholesale & Department Store Union.

According to the union, the new deal lets senior employees

choose their preferred hours first. All workers will get to choose one weekend a month to take off and which late nights they want to work. Managers must honor the choices made by workers. A spokesman for the union said this aspect of the contract sets a new standard for retail.

The scheduling provisions in the contract exceed what parent Macy's Inc. agreed to when the contract for the company's 34th Street Macy's store was negotiated.

"This particular victory will have industry-wide implications because it comes as many retail

workers struggle with underemployment and find it difficult to get the hours they want and deserve," the union said. "A recent study of the retail industry in New York City revealed that only 17 percent of workers have a regular schedule."

The union said it is still hammering out some details with the store regarding a medical fund that's overseen by the union.

A spokeswoman for Bloomingdale's said, "Last night's positive vote covered a significant portion of our new contract, but we still have some work to do towards full ratification." — **EVAN CLARK**