



Latest Stunt at Labor Board Shows SEIU's Charges Have No Merit

Troubled union still struggling to stop fair elections for thousands of their own members to switch

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 15 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- After a year of stalling union elections for more than 100,000 of their own members to quit SEIU, SEIU officials have cast themselves as champions of democracy in a cynical move to manipulate the election schedule in their favor. Since last February, SEIU has blocked or delayed elections at more than 360 healthcare facilities in California where caregivers are organizing to join the National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW).

"In election after election, healthcare workers have chosen NUHW," said Kathleen Volle, a respiratory therapist at St. Louise Regional Hospital in Santa Clara County. "SEIU knows their days are numbered and they're trying to grab anything they can on their way out."

SEIU's latest move comes just a week after 70 percent of nurses at Kaiser Permanente's flagship Los Angeles hospital pledged their votes to NUHW in a government-supervised election -- and just one month since workers at Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital chose NUHW 283-to-13 in what the Los Angeles Times called "a crushing defeat for the SEIU."

For almost a year, SEIU has filed frivolous charges with the labor board to try to deny workers a choice. In June, SEIU President Andy Stern told the Los Angeles Times that his organization had a "legal responsibility" to try to stop these elections.⁽¹⁾ But yesterday, SEIU asked the board to withdraw SEIU's charges at a small number of facilities where SEIU believes it has a chance of winning, so that those elections would be scheduled first, before more SEIU members vote to join NUHW.

At the same time, SEIU is struggling to explain to the labor board why the exact same charges they're trying to withdraw should continue to block elections for the majority of workers who want to join NUHW.

"SEIU has made the same ridiculous charges everywhere to avoid a fair election," said Ami Fanaika, a licensed vocational nurse at Seton Medical Center in Daly City, where SEIU is still trying to deny workers a choice. "Now they want to pick and choose who gets to vote. SEIU should stop trying to divide healthcare workers and get out of our way."

In a letter to the NLRB(2), NUHW attorney Jonathan Siegel explained that out of the 51 petitions that workers filed to join NUHW on February 2 of 2009, SEIU has filed a request to selectively proceed with only 12 of those elections "with no rhyme or reason except their obvious strategic belief that these are favorable playing fields."

At the Daughters of Charity Health System, SEIU has requested to proceed with elections at only two of the four facilities in the system, even though workers at all four facilities bargain together. Within the Sutter Health system, SEIU has requested to proceed at only one out of six facilities where workers have sought to join NUHW.

Notes:

- (1) "SEIU borrows business' anti-union tactics to fend off a rival," Los Angeles Times, June 24, 2009 (<http://bit.ly/7RI1Kv>)
- (2) Siegal letter to NLRB: (<http://bit.ly/NLRB-Letter>)

The National Union of Healthcare Workers is an independent, member-led union, dedicated to improving the lives of healthcare workers and the people they care for. More than 100,000 workers in hospitals, Kaiser Permanente facilities, homecare, and nursing homes have petitioned to join NUHW since January 2009. | NUHW.org

SOURCE National Union of Healthcare Workers