



Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury (center) listens to testimony from workers who want a union at Providence hospitals. Bradbury chaired a "Fair Elections Oversight Commission" hearing under protest by Providence's CEO.

...Workers seek neutrality

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University of Oregon professor Gordon Lafer, who co-chairs the Labor Caucus of the American Political Science Association. That's because, under the law, the party in power — management — has every electoral advantage over the opposition party — the union. Management has complete access to the voters, and can compel them to attend anti-union informational meetings. Unions don't have that access, and don't even get a list of employees until 20 days before an election, on average.

Portland Providence workers complained of shortstaffing and unanswered petitions to management. One brandished a stack of paper she said was anti-union literature she'd received.

Workers from other Providence locations told of free lunches and personal loans to workers during union campaigns; pro-union workers, including a priest, being fired; anti-union films shown at mandatory-attendance staff meetings; union literature torn down from bulletin boards; and restrictions on workers' rights to talk about the union on break or off the clock.

Besides Bradbury, the Commission included Reverend Alcena Boozer of St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, family physician Jill Ginsberg,

Portland State University economics professor Mary King, Reverend Jack Mosbrucker of St. Therese Catholic Church, former Oregon House majority leader Dick Springer, and Rabbi Joseph Wolf of Havurah Shalom.

After hearing testimony, the group issued a resolution calling on Providence management to agree to fair election ground rules: Allowing open discussion in the workplace, promoting truthful and positive communications, and refraining from the use of anti-union consultants, forced-attendance anti-union meetings, or legal delays.

Providence was invited to attend the hearing and offer their own testimony, but Danielson declined.

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