

UNION ORGANIZING

Veterans Nursing Home workers join United Steelworkers

A group of 213 workers at a Lebanon, Oregon, nursing home for veterans won a union May 20. The vote was a “re-run” election, held after the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that the results of an earlier union vote were tainted labor law violations by management at Veterans Care Centers of Oregon. The re-run tally was 75 to 63 in favor of joining United Steelworkers of America (USW).

USW had lost the earlier March 4 union election by one vote, after nursing home managers disciplined pro-union workers for distributing union literature and took other coercive actions that the NLRB concluded violated U.S. labor law.

USW represents about 170 workers at a veterans nursing home in The Dalles, Oregon, that is run by the same non-profit employer.

The newly unionized unit includes certified nurse assistants, licensed practical nurses, medical records clerks, activities co-

ordinators, barbers, and maintenance and transportation workers. A separate union vote was held for “professional” employees like registered nurses, but they voted 8 to 3 not to join the union.

Meanwhile, workers at the nursing home in The Dalles voted May 23 to approve a new three-year agreement that will raise wages 15 percent. For the first time, the agreement also includes union security — a requirement that all represented workers pay union dues.

USW District 12 representative Jim Kilborn said the union faced hostile management there, too. Managers pulled down union information about the tentative agreement on the day of the ratification vote. And even with the contract ratification, supporters will have to defend their union there, because a group of anti-union employees gathered signatures of at least 30 percent of the workforce to hold a decertification vote. That vote has not been scheduled yet.

...Low-wage autism therapists unionize


From Page 3

ceive it? Some surely did. Almost immediately, the company’s email system was taken down, and even the email app itself was deleted from company-provided tablets.


After all that effort by the company, only two workers changed their minds, and — along with a new hire and one worker who was always opposed — made up the four who voted against the union.

For the workers at 102nd Avenue, their next step is to bargain a first contract. Workers hope through the union to be able to raise wages, reduce turnover, and end practices like split shifts where they might work 10 to noon and then sit around three hours unpaid for a 3 to 5 shift.


The Labor Press contacted CARD last week to confirm details of this story, and was directed to human resources director Judith Friend. Friend did not return the call.




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