

# Hospital techs in The Dalles join OFNHP-AFT Local 5017

Vote result is an absolute smack-down to union-busters and the managers who hired them.

By Don McIntosh

It's rare to see such a lopsided vote: In ballots counted Sept. 24, hospital techs at Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, Oregon, voted 45-4 to unionize with Oregon Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals (OFNHP)-American Federation of Nurses Local 5017. That's more than 10 to 1, and it means the hospital will have to recognize and bargain with OFNHP as the representative of 72 diagnostic imaging technologists, respiratory therapists, and other techs.

Mid-Columbia is a nonprofit 49-bed regional acute care hospital that serves the Columbia River Gorge and surrounding areas. The ground for the union campaign was set after years without raises, not even cost-of-living, and a growing sense that management wasn't listening. Hospital techs contacted OFNHP this spring after they were inspired by similar workers who were gearing up for a strike at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend.

"They basically had organized themselves," said OFNHP staff organizer Sam Potter. "More than 80% of the department, when I first stepped in, was already engaged, interested

in forming the union, and had been talking amongst themselves."

Management's anti-union campaign stumbled from the beginning. When OFNHP asked the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold an election for the 50 workers categorized as "technical," 45 of them had already signed union cards.

Lawyers for Mid-Columbia proposed to add workers to OFNHP's proposed unit, a standard anti-union tactic meant to dilute union support. But it backfired. With two days to respond, OFNHP put out feelers and found that most of those workers would like to have a union too; OFNHP did-

n't object, and 22 workers were added to the group that would vote.

Next, just days after Mid-Columbia's HR director wrote to workers deriding the union as a "third party" that would come between them and the hospital, Mid-Columbia brought out its own third party: a pair of union-busters from a suburban Los Angeles firm. Based on previous federally-required disclosures, Potter thinks Cesar Lopez and Arthur Wentworth were paid \$3,000 a day for their work trying to talk workers out of the union. But as they conducted mandatory anti-union meetings (which are illegal in Oregon), they were hemmed in by union

supporters who came prepared to question and push back. The consultants presented themselves as neutrals, educators who just wanted to make sure that workers knew all the facts.

"Then why is your web address VoteNo.com?" workers asked. The consultants were gone by the time ballots were mailed.

Potter said the newly unionized techs are ready to stand in solidarity with the already-unionized nurses in Oregon Nurses Association, who've been having difficulty getting an acceptable union contract.

"As the newest union at Mid-Columbia, we have their back."

## UNIONIZATION → JUL-AUG 2021

The following are Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces where workers have decided whether to be represented by a union. The thumbs-up symbol means workers will be union-represented. Thumbs-down means they'll be on their own. The information comes from the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

### Union election results

Employer (Location) Union	Yes-No	
<b>Oregon Virtual Academy</b> (North Bend) AFT-Oregon	85-16	👍
▪ 101 teachers, counselors, instructional coaches, and support staff		
<b>Safeway</b> (Portland) Bakers Local 114	2-1	👍
▪ 3 production bakers, utility bakers, and cake decorators at the 8145 SW Barbur Blvd. store		
<b>Imperfect Foods</b> (Oregon, Washington, Idaho) Teamsters Local 162	42-44	👎
▪ 102 delivery drivers in Clackamas, Springfield, Tumwater, SeaTac, Spokane Valley and Boise		
<b>South Hillsboro Immediate Care Clinic</b> (Hillsboro) Oregon AFSCME	11-0	👍
▪ 11 radiology techs, medical assistants and receptionists		

### Unionization by majority signup

Employer (Location) Union
<b>Office of Public Defense Services</b> (Salem) Oregon AFSCME
▪ 25 employees



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