

Meg Sinclair
Nurse
LD 1756

Good afternoon, my name is Meg Sinclair. I'm a registered nurse at Maine Medical Center and I'm here today to testify in support of LD 1756.

As you all know, nurses at maine med ratified our historic first union contract last fall. Being apart of organizing my workplace brings me tremendous pride, especially in light of the truly disgusting busting tactics that maine health engaged in.

In the peak of the pandemic, maine health contracted with Reliant Labor Consultants, who's website says that their consultants will "help your employees maintain a union free environment". Maine Health paid exorbitant costs to fly these consultants in from all over the country, and then forced every single nurse at Maine Medical Center to sit in on these captive audience meetings.

For perspective, at that time- patients were not permitted to have visitors in the hospital due to the soaring COVID infection rates. In the emergency room, family members would literally beg me to allow them to stay with their loved one, and due to the rigidity of our visitor policy I would have to turn them away. Within the same time frame, I was forced to enter the hospital on my day off and sit in a room with a dozen or so other nurses and this out of state consultant. These consultants were also permitted to round on units to "answer questions".... however when my coworkers and I attempted to go to our chief nursing officer's office to talk to him about patient care issues, we were escorted off the property by security for violating the visitor policy.

Pandemic aside, these mandatory meetings were incredibly insulting to me as a worker. My time is valuable, and it was completely wasted in that conference room. I incredulously watched the consultant's slide show, and couldn't help but audibly laugh as she attempted to spin the democratic process of voting for a union as some sort of evil scheme.

I won't lie, winning our union election in spite of these desperate (and expensive) efforts by my employer made the victory somuch sweeter. However, that doesn't mean all workers looking to engage in collective action should have to go through this. These captive audience meetings had one goal- and that was to intimidate every single nurse at maine medical center. These meetings took nurses away from the bedside, away from their families at one of the most traumatizing points of our career. They created unnecessary division and hostility between nurses. And ultimately, for what?

The reality is, the culture of the working class is changing nation wide. Workers are no longer willing to put up with working conditions that make them feel less than, or disrespected, or coerced. We as workers should not be forced to absorb the political ideas of a boss that is trying to oppress us.

Maine Health continues to exemplify the simple fact that they will not lead by example or do the right thing without legislative action. Bosses will do whatever possible to undermine the solidarity of their workforce, because they know the strength of collective bargaining. If they want to offer these busting meetings as an option, they should have the liberty to do so. But we all know, if these meetings weren't mandatory, the attendance would be abysmally low.

Thank you all for your time and attention to this matter, I'm open to any questions