



CALIFORNIA
NURSES
ASSOCIATION



NATIONAL NURSES
ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

A Voice for Nurses. A Vision for Healthcare.
www.calnurses.org / www.nnoc.net

April 10, 2008

Bob Roman
Tom Broderick
Chicago DSA
1608 N Milwaukee - Room 403
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear Bob and Tom:

On behalf of CNA/NNOC and Rose Ann DeMoro, we regret that SEIU is attempting to bully and extort the Debs-Thomas-Harrington Dinner on April 25th. By threatening to picket this singular event they are undermining your ability to raise the funds that support struggles of vital importance to Chicago progressives. SEIU is employing the same tactic against Central Labor Councils and State Federations of Labor by threatening to end their per capita payments unless these bodies do SEIU's bidding. Similarly, when the AFL-CIO did not carry out the "correct" program according to SEIU, they split the labor movement.

Sadly, Chicago DSA, your honorees and progressives in Chicago are the victims of SEIU's unconscionable threat.

Rose Ann DeMoro accepted your invitation in order to speak at the dinner about the importance of single-payer. We would urge you to host a debate that night between us and SEIU on single-payer - Rose Ann DeMoro will withdraw from participation, but we would send another representative to engage that discussion.

This is vital because despite some lip service in some quarters to HR 676, SEIU International does not actively organize support for single-payer. As SEIU President Andrew Stern told the America's Health Insurance Plans policy conference last month in Washington, DC: *"I don't think the country is going to go to a single payer system right now... I don't think it's willing, I don't think it's able."*

This strikes us as rather stunning, until one considers how Stern has appeared with F. Lee Scott, CEO of Wal-Mart, to promote their shared vision for healthcare reform, and has joined

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coalitions with small businesses and corporations that have spent millions in opposition to single-payer.

In addition to Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott, Stern's allies on healthcare reform include other major corporate interests such as the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Realtors, Manpower Inc., and Business Roundtable, and the insurance industry. These coalitions provide political cover for the insurance industry, creating the impression that it supports reform, and for Wal-Mart to deflect criticism for its failure to provide decent health coverage for its employees. His mantra is clearly music to the ears of the corporations who have shifted healthcare costs and reduced benefits to employees: *"It is time to admit that the employer-based health care system is dead, a relic of the industrial economy."* (Huffington Post, February 7, 2007).

Since he doesn't believe in single-payer, what option does that leave? Individual mandate. SEIU supported those mandates in California. No surprise then that Stern has teamed with Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon to push his bill that would eliminate the tax-subsidy of employer-provided plans to be replaced by tax credits and (inadequate) subsidies to individuals mandated to purchase their own policies. This is also a version of what Republican Presidential candidate John McCain advocates.

In short, Stern works to reduce or eliminate healthcare costs for all employers through coalitions that (1) blunt the grassroots movement for genuine, single payer healthcare reform, (2) deny employer responsibility to provide health care coverage for workers, and (3) re-direct national and state legislative proposals toward insurance-based reforms that shift the burden from business to individuals.

Chicago progressives cannot allow this agenda to set the terms for healthcare reform.

Three other issues may be of interest to you and the dinner participants:

1. The organizing victory that CNA/NNOC had last week winning the first private hospital in the state of Texas
2. The continued campaign by SEIU International toward RNs and implications for other unions
3. The Current War with SEIU and the new website on SEIU www.ServingEmployersInsteadofUs.org

VICTORY IN TEXAS

I have attached a flyer documenting our victory in Texas. This was a great night in Houston and follows our recent successes throughout the U.S. Along with Texas, we and our allied organizations have had campaigns and victories in such varied states as Nevada, Illinois, Arizona, Pennsylvania and, of course, California. We are organizing around the US in health care. Those unions who have an interest in health care organizing are talking to us regarding potential joint campaigns. We are reaching out to local unions should they have an interest in discussing healthcare in their areas.

OHIO WAR WITH SEIU AND IMPLICATIONS FOR OTHER UNIONS

For many years, the AFL-CIO has been working to try to obtain an agreement with Catholic health care chains for better circumstances for elections. These discussions included AFL-CIO unions as well as SEIU. During the course of these meetings, SEIU cut its own deal without even informing the AFL-CIO that there was a deal! SEIU had the employer file for eight hospitals with SEIU as the exclusive representative without a single card from a worker.

We at the CNA/NNOC believe in neutrality agreements, but we stand in fundamental opposition to employers filing for workers and choosing the company union for the workers, which is what happened in Ohio.

In Ohio, SEIU had the employer file the election petition without SEIU having signed up one worker! You can believe that every boss in this country would rather have an SEIU-like union for a “partner” than a union that fights for standards for workers.

CNA/NNOC distributed information and met with the employee RNs of Catholic Healthcare Partners, making them aware of the upcoming vote and of their rights to a fair process, then the management of Catholic Health Partners and SEIU abruptly cancelled the sham election.

This is another example of how distorted labor law has become under the Bush NLRB, since the elimination of employer-selected unions - "known as company unions" - was the explicit purpose of the National Labor Relation Act in 1935. Clearly, the demonstration of worker support through majority card-check required by the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) is the opposite of this employer-driven process utilized by SEIU.

The implications for EFCA are severe if employers in collusion with a union and the NLRB can now pick the union they want to deal with. Imagine when faced with a card check drive under EFCA, WalMart submits an employer petition for a yes/no vote on recognition of the "WalMart Employees Association." The WEA would have potentially more members with one employer than the UFCW has nationally at hundreds. Or perhaps, Hilton or Hyatt Hotels finds or creates a union more to their liking than Unite/HERE and installs them through the same employer petition process.

I would urge every union labor leader and progressive to consider this scenario and the implications for all industries, including how these deals can undercut current standards and contracts that that have been established.

CURRENT CAMPAIGN OF SEIU AGAINST CNA/NNOC

While SEIU attempts to portray itself as an innocent victim, they have and continue to attempt to undo all our campaigns. Like union busters, they mail slick literature to nurses where we are organizing with straight up deceptions.

Rather than working with us, they have chosen to disrupt our union campaigns. Last year, when we were organizing in Reno, NV to an obvious successful conclusion, SEIU intervened in the election and then had to withdraw.

Currently, SEIU International has local staff in California to disrupt our facilities here for six weeks. Since two thirds of the local unions are now headed by Stern appointees, staff compliance is assured. They hope to have 200 staff from around the country join with their California staff in their attempt to destabilize us.

For two weeks they have been phone banking nurses throughout the U.S. and sending out national mailers to convince nurses to tell CNA/NNOC to stop spending dues money on legislation (such as single-payer and the defeat of their healthcare "reform" scheme for California modeled on Massachusetts' plan) and on organizing. They have even constructed a new website against us.

You should be aware that CNA/NNOC is well acquainted with SEIU's prepubescent campaign thematic. From a previous campaign against us, an SEIU organizer proclaimed to an elected official, "You don't want to see baaaaad purple!"

However, the benefit of SEIU's involvement in California is that it provides a good opportunity to educate our nurses on company unionism, and what is at stake when your boss hand picks your union and displaces reps with call centers, as SEIU has done.

After discussions with our Board of Directors, we have decided that it is appropriate for our members and staff to visit the members of SEIU locals, both in California and nationally, who are deploying staff into our facilities to talk to members.

To that end, we have developed our own website: www.ServingEmployersInsteadofUs.org (SEIU's initials), where we plan to document the level of deep dissatisfaction with SEIU members regarding the International's new corporate direction.

We will also document on that site the incredible façade of SEIU growth over the last 11 years, as they have organized virtually nothing. Their only growth is actually through the deals that they cut with government officials after hefty campaign contributions.

This is an extremely important fight. We believe that the future of the single payer movement and the labor movement will be substantially harmed if SEIU's pro corporate agenda is successful.

In conclusion, CNA/NNOC hopes that SEIU will choose to commit its energies to democratic unionism and the passage of EFCA. Under EFCA, workers choose their own union; the corporation doesn't choose it for them. The SEIU deal in Ohio was the opposite of the demonstration of majority support through card check required by EFCA.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me at 510/273-2242, or visit our new website www.ServingEmployersInsteadofUs.org.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Lighty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Michael Lighty
Director of Public Policy
CNA/NNOC