



California

My name is José Galarza.

Floor Technician • Parkview Community Hospital • Riverside, CA

We need the



I used to work for Parkview Community Hospital in Riverside, California, as a floor technician. I was laid off on July 9, 2008, and some people were escorted out before that date.

Right after we started our union organizing drive, the hospital outsourced our department because we wanted to unionize. Since that time I have been unemployed.

The hospital has about 200 beds and there were 6 of us on the floor technician crew, working graveyard shift. We maintained all the floors; keeping the floors shiny by stripping and waxing. We also maintained the carpets throughout the hospital. Every now and then, they would assign us to housekeeping if they were short-handed.

After the nurses got the union in early 2008, the United Steelworkers started passing out cards on May 29 and almost everyone in our department was strong for the union. Within days, management found out, and they started to hold meetings. The CEO told everyone to come to speak with him and tell him any problems.

One night our boss came in because the day and swing shifts had meetings on this matter and basically just said, "We don't want a union." That was it. When they saw that there was no response from the people, they knew that we all supported the union. On June 18 our department was told they were bringing in an outside contractor to do our work. That was just three weeks after we

started signing cards! This was their way of trying to break the union for all the other hospital employees, and that's illegal.

Almost 50 people lost their jobs in Environmental Services. There were three who were offered positions in security, dietary and sterile processing. The rest had to leave.

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I feel that we need a union because the hospital is doing what they want. They treated you rough. With a union we would have some sort of work description.

After they let us go they wanted to give us severance pay. So we got an attorney to read it and they told us that by us signing it we could

not talk to the media or anyone about what happened to us. I didn't sign it and a couple of other people didn't and that opened the case for the National Labor Relations Board.

The hospital took wages from the nurses without letting them know and they have joined our complaint in front of the National Labor Relations Board. The nurses were picketing outside the hospital because of the wage cuts and the hospital didn't like that. They haven't even ratified a contract and it has been a year.

The law we have just doesn't protect us. It was less than one month from the time we started signing cards to when they laid us off and sub-contracted out our jobs. Sure it was illegal, but the hospital got rid of us and scared everyone away from the union. The Employee Free Choice Act would at least have penalties and give us a chance.