



Newsletter

Labour board dismisses corporate bid to block contract workers' vote count

CONTRACT WORKERS IN Lower Mainland health facilities are one step closer to learning whether they've voted to join the Hospital Employees' Union as a result of a labour board ruling dismissing corporate objections to the union's political and legal advocacy work.

Three foreign-owned corporations – Compass Group, Aramark and Sodexo – argued that HEU and the BC Government and Service Employees' Union efforts to represent their employees was in conflict with the unions' court challenge to provincial government contract-shredding legislation that cleared the way for privatization and contracting out.

In its November 10 ruling, the five-member panel of the B.C. Labour Relations Board dismisses the corporations' objections and affirms that: "As social and political institutions, unions have an important right to speak out and take positions on political issues and may pursue legal and political goals, not just collective bargaining goals."

The ruling removes a major barrier to counting the votes cast by contract workers – some more than a year ago – on whether to become members of HEU. More than 3,000 workers are poised to become HEU members once the ballot boxes are opened and counted by the LRB.

"We're hopeful that the LRB will move quickly to make sure that the democratic choice of these workers is both heard and respected," says HEU's acting secretary-business manager Zorica Bosancic.

"These workers have courageously exercised their right to join a union of their choice and deserve to have their wishes respected without further delay."

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