



NATIONAL UNION OF
HEALTHCARE WORKERS

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October 7, 2021

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

As a union representing 15,000 healthcare workers, including workers at three Tenet-owned hospitals, we are writing to ask you and all Massachusetts public officials to take any and all steps necessary to support the 700 courageous registered nurses of St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester as they seek an equitable resolution to their historic strike, which now, at seven months, is the longest nurses strike in our state's history.

This is a righteous strike with only one goal — to ensure safer working condition to better protect their community, which is being waged against Dallas-based Tenet Healthcare, a heartless and ruthless for-profit corporation that has spent well over \$100 million to force and prolong this strike at a time when COVID-19 is surging and overwhelming facilities in Worcester and throughout Massachusetts.

In recognition of this crisis, the nurses made it clear several weeks ago that they were ready to accept an agreement proposed by the hospital to end the strike so they can get back into the hospital and care for the patients of Worcester. Yet, Tenet has scuttled that effort by demanding a settlement that would deny the striking nurses an equitable “return to work” provision, denying them the ability to return to work at their previous positions — a demand that no union, nor anyone who values the rights of working people would or should accept under any circumstances. Meanwhile, Tenet has also been engaged in a number of alleged unfair labor practices and has been actively recruiting and hiring staff to permanently replace these nurses, specifically targeting the most experienced nurses as well as those who are leaders within the nurses' union.

The nurses who Tenet is refusing to guarantee a return to their positions are the same nurses who have provided expert care to their community during the worst public health crisis in our nation's history. They did so for many months under unsafe staffing conditions, with inadequate PPE and no vaccines, which exposed hundreds of nurses to COVID infection, placing all the nurses' own lives and their families' lives in jeopardy every day.

The ability to end a lawful strike without permanent replacement, as Tenet is demanding, is a major issue for our union and the entire labor movement and is one that we cannot allow, particularly in an instance where the very safety of the community is at stake. This is particularly true in Massachusetts, which prides itself as a labor friendly state that supports and values the rights of all union members and working people. The right to strike without fear of replacement is also one of the key components of the Pro Act, vitally important federal legislation supported by all unions.

We have been pleased to see strong opposition to Tenet's actions from nearly every member of the Massachusetts Congressional delegation, as well as Worcester's Mayor, City Council and the Worcester legislative delegation. The nurses strike and this issue is also being followed by labor, health care and social justice organizations across the country and across the world, as their struggle is rightfully viewed as more than a local fight for safer patient care, but as pivotal fight to define and protect the rights of all workers to stand up against corporate greed and blatantly retaliatory labor practices.

So, given the nobility of the nurses' struggle and its impact on the safety of the Greater Worcester community, as well as the broader implications and dangerous precedent Tenet's position would establish for all working people, we call upon the elected officials and all entities involved in the provision of health care in Massachusetts to do whatever you can to compel Tenet to settle this strike with the dignity and respect these nurses deserve.



Sincerely,
Sal Rosselli, President
National Union of Healthcare Workers

Cc: Massachusetts Nurses Association

Governor Charlie Baker
Lt. Governor Karyn Polito
Senator Ed Markey
Senator Elizabeth Warren
Congressman James McGovern
Congressman Richard Neal
Congresswoman Lori Trahan
Congressman Jake Auchincloss
Congressman Katherine Clark
Congressman Seth Moulton

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley
Congressman Stephen Lynch
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