

I am a Registered Nurse (RN) at Barton Memorial Hospital in South Lake Tahoe (Barton). I recently participated in a union election at Barton conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. Based on my experience, I believe the Board should maintain its current election rules and procedures in order to protect workers and ensure fair elections.

Overall, I felt like the process under the Board's rules was clear. The rules established a clear timeline, which helped keep RNs motivated to make our hospital better for employees and safer for patients. RNs knew they would have election results in a timely manner. We knew that once we filed for election, we would have our vote within a reasonable time, which helped encourage nurses to stick with the process.

Ultimately, the time from petition to election at Barton was 21 days. Within those 21 days, the hospital was able to reach each RN. Barton management did their best to try to impact RNs' decisions and it felt like they were trying to divide the hospital. Barton sent packets out to nurses' homes with union-busting information, posted anti-union literature on the Barton website home page, placed anti-union literature on bulletin boards within the facility, regularly sent out anti-union emails to nurses, and the CEO and HR director even made an online video urging nurses to vote no. Barton management also held mandatory meetings for RNs regarding the union—nurses had to attend at least 2, one with an HR consultant, and another with the HR Director and the CEO. Other departments including support staff, radiology CNAs, and housekeeping, were also required to attend anti-union meetings hosted by Barton management where they were led to believe that if RNs voted to unionize, other hospital staff would be negatively impacted. RNs did not have the same platform or access to our colleagues as Barton management did. Many nurses felt intimidated and believed they would get in trouble if they talked about the union at work. When we posted pro-union materials at work, they would often be taken down. We did not have access to post counter information on Barton's website or have a union representative speak at the mandatory meetings hosted by Barton management. Thanks to the Board rules, however, we did have phone and email contact information for our colleagues. This allowed us to talk to RNs throughout the day as opposed to only when we would see each other at work or when our schedules happened to align. Many RNs work alternate days and weren't able to have conversations during shifts, so having alternate means of communication was crucial to ensure everyone had access to a full spectrum of information.

As described above, management had more than enough time to reach nurses with their message, and while nurses were able to connect with one another in large part because of our access to contact information through the Board rules, we still ultimately clearly had a disadvantage compared to the employer. Therefore, if the time to vote had been extended further, there would have been an even bigger divide because the hospital would be able to put out way more information than nurses. This would benefit the heads of the hospital, but not RNs at the bedside who need the most assistance. In addition to having greater access to employees, the hospital has more resources in general to try to break union efforts. Once the election was over, the hospital stopped spending time and resources trying to bust the union, which was beneficial for everyone. And a lot of the things that hospital management said might happen if we voted for the union did not happen. Seeing the reality of what a union means, many of the nurses who voted against the union now say they would vote yes if they could do it again.

For these reasons, I would like to see the Board rules remain the same. If anything, the rules could be made stronger to shorten the time between petition filing and election. By the time we filed our petition, we already had strong reasons for why we wanted a union and the extra time to the election only served to waste resources and create unnecessary tensions within the hospital. Therefore, any changes in the rules that would weaken protections for workers or allow for further delay to election would be unwarranted.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paris Kelly", written over a horizontal line.

Paris Kelly