



www.catholicscholarsforworkerjustice.org

December 3, 2009

Mr. Kevin A. Klockenga
President and Chief Executive Officer
St. Joseph Health System Sonoma County
Sent Via Email

Dear Mr. Klockenga,

In your letter of Oct. 5, 2009 to Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice you explained that “SRMH leadership was scheduled to meet with NUHW officials to attempt to reach mutually agreed-upon ground rules for a future election.” We in CSWJ rejoiced in this statement since it demonstrated a new openness on the part of SJHS to improve labor relations and it was the first concrete application of the joint USCCB, CHA, and labor union document, “Respecting the Just Rights of Workers: Guidance and Options for Catholic Healthcare and Unions.”

We have followed developments in this matter and are disappointed that SEIU refused to attend a meeting with SJHS and NUHW to decide upon ground rules for an election. We believe, however, that you still had a moral obligation to meet with NUHW since the interests of the workers should not be held hostage to one party who refuses to attend a meeting. Simply meeting with a union to discuss ground rules in no way constitutes an endorsement of that union by SJHS. In the name of the common good, we urge you to meet at the earliest possible moment with NUHW to discuss ground rules for the last two weeks of the campaign. SEIU should, of course, be invited but if they refuse to attend we urge you to schedule the meeting anyway.

In addition, we are deeply alarmed at reports that SJHS has reverted to an earlier form of behavior and is actively seeking to bust the union movement at Santa Rosa. It is a violation of Catholic Social Teaching on workers’ rights for an employer to demonstrate anti-union sentiments. The decision for or against a union is rooted in the natural right of free association and the employer may under no circumstances violate or denigrate this right through actions or conversations with workers that have a clear anti-union prejudice. Accordingly, we call upon Saint Joseph Health System to cease its anti-union campaign and to follow the norms that are set forth in *Respecting the Just Rights of Workers: Guidance and Options for Catholic Healthcare and Unions*.

Sincerely yours,
JOSEPH J. FAHEY
Chairperson, Catholic Scholars for Worker Justice