

Office & Professional Employees International Union | Local 29

AFL-CIO & CLC

Tamara R. Rubyn, President/Business Manager | Kelly Gschwend, Secretary-Treasurer/Business Representative

June 18, 2019

Honorable Dr. Richard Pan, Chair
Senate Health Committee
State Capitol, Room 2191
Sacramento CA 95814

Re: SB 343 Healthcare Date Disclosure – Support

Dear Senator Pan:

On behalf of the OPEIU Local 29 membership, OPEIU 29 fully supports SB343 (Pan), your bill to remove Kaiser specific exceptions to health insurance and hospital transparency specified in existing law. SB 343 (pan) will ensure that union members and employers bargaining for benefits have adequate information to understand the underlying cost drivers behind Kaiser's rates and the degree to which Kaiser Hospitals contribute to healthcare costs. Given that Kaiser health plan represents 40% of the insurance market, and one out of every ten California hospitals is a Kaiser facility, these data from Kaiser are crucial to policymakers' understanding of how California's healthcare markets are functioning.

We have historically supported measures that promote transparency across the healthcare industry. The cost of healthcare has grown more unaffordable by the year, making it increasingly difficult to bargain with our employers on raises for our members. Transparency continues to be an effective tool for better understanding the underlying cost drivers and holding the industry accountable.

In 2019, it is no longer fair or responsible to exempt Kaiser from the transparency requirements which apply to all other integrated delivery models, and to all other health plans and hospital systems. It is for those reasons that we are proudly to support SB 343.

Sincerely,

Tamara R. Rubyn

Tamara R. Rubyn
President/Business Manager

Kelly Gschwend

Kelly Gschwend
Secretary-Treasurers

TK/lm(SB343support061819)
Cwa:9415/afl-cio



Engineers & Scientists of California

Local 20, IFPTE AFL-CIO/CLC

810 Clay Street
Oakland, CA 94607
Tel 510 238 8320
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June 17, 2019

The Honorable Supervisor Mar
Board of Supervisors
City and County of San Francisco
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, Ca. 94102-4689

Re: File No. 190690 Resolution Supporting California State Senate Bill No. 343 (Pan) - Uniform Healthcare Data Disclosure - **SUPPORT**

Dear Supervisor Mar,

As a representative of more than 1,500 Clinical Lab Scientists, Genetic Counselors and Coordinators, Medical Laboratory Technicians, Optometrists and Optometric Assistants, and Outpatient Rehab Therapists at Northern California Kaiser Permanente and an active participant in the Kaiser Permanente Labor-Management Partnership, Engineers and Scientists of California Local 20, IFPTE writes today in support of your resolution in supporting California State Senate Bill No. 343 (Pan).

ESC Local 20 is a longtime supporter of transparency across the healthcare industry in order to maintain affordable healthcare costs for consumers, employers, and taxpayers. Rising healthcare costs have created a crisis of affordability for working families in California. Uniform reporting requirements will aid employers and employees in bargaining for affordable health benefits and will help policymakers to understand the functioning of California's healthcare market.

In 2019, it is no longer fair or reasonable to exempt Kaiser from the transparency requirements which apply to all other integrated delivery models, and to all other health plans and hospital systems. It is for those reasons that we are proud to support SB 343 and thank you for your resolution in support of Senator Dr Richard Pan's legislation.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. Wright
Legislative Director

Lew, Lisa (BOS)

From: Board of Supervisors, (BOS)
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2019 4:23 PM
To: BOS-Supervisors; BOS Legislation, (BOS)
Subject: FW: UNITE HERE Local 2's Support of Supervisor Mar's Resolution in Support of SB 343 (Uniform Healthcare Data Disclosure)
Attachments: 11,000 People Who Prepare Your Airline ...sidering a Strike - The New York Times.pdf; Local 2 Support for SB 343 Healthcare Disclosure - SF BOS (6-17-19).pdf
Categories: 190690

From: Mario Yedidia <myedidia@unitehere.org>
Sent: Monday, June 17, 2019 4:11 PM
To: Board of Supervisors, (BOS) <board.of.supervisors@sfgov.org>
Subject: UNITE HERE Local 2's Support of Supervisor Mar's Resolution in Support of SB 343 (Uniform Healthcare Data Disclosure)

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.

Honorable Members, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Monday, June 10, 2019
Re: Support of Supervisor Mar's Resolution in Support of SB 343 (Uniform Healthcare Data Disclosure)

Dear Honorable Members:

I write on behalf of the 12,000 hotel and food service workers who are members of UNITE HERE Local 2. Last fall, 2,500 workers at seven Marriott hotels in San Francisco went on strike for 61 days because one job should be enough to live with dignity and respect when you work for the wealthiest hotelier in history.

But despite the historic contract our members won in that strike, the increasing cost of health care continues to threaten their livelihoods. Health care costs are more than \$13 per hour in San Francisco's union hotels.

At the other end of the spectrum, tens of thousands of airline catering workers across the U.S. who are members of UNITE HERE (including some 2,000 members of Local 2) are currently taking strike votes; their wages are too low, and the health care coverage they are offered by their employers is substandard. (See attached New York Times article, "11,000 People Who Prepare Your Airline Food Are Considering a Strike," June 4, 2019.)

California State Senate Bill 343 is a commonsense measure that would bring Kaiser's state regulatory reporting requirements in line with what is required of other health plans and hospitals. For the past

seven years, UNITE HERE has been advancing state legislation to bring transparency to health care prices. SB 343 is of a piece with that goal.

Kaiser Foundation Health Plan is our state's largest insurer, and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals has more hospital beds than any other system in the state. It is eminently reasonable to expect both entities to report in the same ways we require of Kaiser's competitors.

We urge the board to approve Supervisor Mar's resolution declaring the City & County's support for state Senate Bill 343.

Thank you.

Anand Singh
President
UNITE HERE Local 2

11,000 People Who Prepare Your Airline Food Are Considering a Strike

By Noam Scheiber

June 4, 2019

President Trump announced a deal to end the government shutdown in January after a shortage of air traffic controllers briefly stopped flights into La Guardia Airport. At the time, many concluded that workers' impact on travel had led the White House to retreat.

"I think it's really obvious to all aviation workers that that's what happened," said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants. "There are also many people in government who echo" that analysis.

Now, other airport workers are testing that proposition.

This month, about 11,000 airline catering employees — the people who prepare and transport food and beverages that millions of passengers consume on flights each year — will vote on a first step toward a possible labor stoppage. Many make the minimum wage in their areas, or less, and toil in harsh conditions with limited benefits. But collectively, they have the power to disrupt the air travel network.

"The smallest mishap or interruption in any kind of service ripples out," said Liesl Orenic, a labor historian at Dominican University in Illinois who has studied airport workers. "If a plane doesn't get catered, it can interrupt all the people getting on that plane and all the other flights that plane has to do."

For decades, as unionization rates have fallen and the country has moved to a service economy, organized labor has found that it has less power to affect employers' bottom lines.

Even successful labor actions in the last few years — like the Fight for \$15 campaign, which has helped raise wages in fast food and other industries — have tended to bring political pressure through sophisticated public-relations tactics rather than attempts to directly inflict economic losses.

But the muscle-flexing by airport workers may reflect the return of a model in which aggrieved employees threaten the wheels of commerce.

During the government shutdown, an increase in the number of air traffic controllers calling in sick prompted the Federal Aviation Administration to halt flights headed for La Guardia. (Their union said that the delays had resulted from the absence of a small number of controllers acting individually amid the strains of the shutdown and that it would oppose a coordinated sickout.)

More recently, mechanics at Southwest Airlines won raises after a large increase in the number of maintenance issues they flagged forced flight delays and cancellations.

D. Taylor, president of the hospitality-industry union Unite Here, which represents a majority of airline catering workers, did not rule out the possibility that his members' actions could have similar effects.



Mr. Blanco and Maria Jose Leira, a member of the staff of Unite Here Local 100, encouraged Sky Chefs drivers last week to sign a pledge to vote in favor of authorizing a strike. Desiree Rios for The New York Times

“We’ll do whatever it takes, within legal means, to make sure workers get good contracts,” Mr. Taylor said.

The workers are primarily employees of two large catering companies, LSG Sky Chefs and Gate Gourmet, although United Airlines employs some directly. As a group, they are among the lowest-paid workers at airports, especially among those whose labor directly affects operations on flights.

The union is proposing a national wage floor of \$15 per hour for all catering workers and wants the companies to make their health insurance substantially more affordable.

Preston Strickland, who works at the Sky Chefs kitchen serving Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport, said he typically prepares over 1,500 cold entrees in a shift, which he spends in an area kept at 40 degrees or below.

Mr. Strickland makes a little over \$11 per hour after more than four years on the job and cannot afford health insurance on his company’s plan, he said.

“I prefer to pay my phone bill, car insurance,” he said. “If I get sick, I go to the emergency room.” He recently spent several months homeless because he didn’t have money for rent.

A Sky Chefs spokesman said the union had agreed to workers’ pay rates in previous rounds of negotiation, the most recent of which began in 2015. The union also agreed to allow those pay rates to supersede state or local wage laws.

Workers also complain about the companies’ tendency to run kitchens with too few workers, too little equipment and haphazard upkeep.

Juan Blanco, a driver with Sky Chefs at a kitchen serving Kennedy International Airport in New York, said a door on his truck had a broken spring and fell on his head in 2017, leaving him with a concussion and a shoulder injury requiring surgery. He was out of work for weeks and relied on workers’ compensation payments to cover his hospital bills.

The Food and Drug Administration has validated some of these concerns, citing the catering companies for numerous food-safety infractions over the years.

In March 2018, the agency sent Gate Gourmet a warning letter regarding its workplace near Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, where inspectors observed “dead nymph and adult cockroaches too numerous to count” in areas where food was cooked, as well as “a heavy buildup of more than a day’s accumulation of grease, food deposits and general filth.”

The agency said in a follow-up letter two months later that the company had addressed its concerns. A Gate Gourmet spokeswoman said the company had worked closely with the F.D.A. to correct the issues.



Preston Strickland said he made a little over \$11 an hour in a Sky Chefs kitchen serving Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. JerSean Golatt for The New York Times

Unlike most private-sector workers, caterers and other airline workers are covered by the Railway Labor Act, whose purpose is to avoid chaos in the rail and airline industries because of their importance to interstate commerce. That means workers don't have the right to strike without permission — officially a “release” from mediation — from a federal agency known as the National Mediation Board, which rarely grants it.

But as recent events have demonstrated, there is a wide gulf between labor harmony and a formal strike, and workers have ample opportunity within that range to affect air travel. During the stalemate at Southwest, the company accused its mechanics of effectively grounding planes over minor glitches, such as missing row numbers. The union denied these allegations.

Some workers in airline-related jobs have long been leery of taking an aggressive approach to labor issues. Air traffic controllers were traumatized for decades by the mass firing of controllers at the hands of the Reagan administration over an illegal strike in 1981. Until this year, they tended to avoid any significant action that could be construed as coordinated.

Some economically vulnerable workers have been less assertive as well, but experts say catering workers have underappreciated leverage. According to Robert W. Mann, a longtime airline industry consultant, there is far less margin for error built into the air travel system compared with two or three decades ago.

If a flight is supposed to arrive at Gate G17, Mr. Mann posited, “and half an hour before departure it flips over to Gate A24, the logistics of getting that catering to arrive at the now distant Gate A24 in time to do everything else in the sequence you have to do it is quite daunting.” A team of less than fully motivated workers could throw the whole process off.

In principle, the airlines could scale back in-flight food and beverage service. But they would risk a backlash from passengers, one that might be amplified by other airport workers.

“We will also take part in helping to inform the public more generally about what disruption this would have in our ability to provide service,” said Ms. Nelson, the flight attendants’ leader.

The confrontation looms as labor disruptions appear to be rising, albeit in vastly different contexts.

New England workers at the grocery chain Stop & Shop won wage increases and preserved health care benefits that the company had threatened after more than 30,000 of them staged an 11-day strike in April that cost the company an estimated \$100 million.

That followed last year’s teacher walkouts, which shut down schools in several states for days. Over all, the number of workers who took part in strikes involving more than 1,000 workers last year reached its highest level since the mid-1980s; the number of days lost to such strikes was the highest in 15 years.

The National Mediation Board, where Republicans hold a majority, appears to appreciate the high stakes for management and labor that may be converging at airports.

This year, the board proposed a rule that would make it easier to eliminate airport and railway unions. Although the rule had long been in the works, according to the agency, the timing of its release struck union leaders as intriguing: It came less than one week after the government shutdown ended.

Follow Noam Scheiber on Twitter: [@noamscheiber](https://twitter.com/noamscheiber).

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

A version of this article appears in print on June 4, 2019, on Page B1 of the New York edition with the headline: Air Travel Workers Test Newfound Might



UNITE HERE!

Honorable Members, San Francisco Board of Supervisors
Monday, June 10, 2019

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I write on behalf of the 12,000 hotel and food service workers who are members of UNITE HERE Local 2. Last fall, 2,500 workers at seven Marriott hotels in San Francisco went on strike for 61 days because one job should be enough to live with dignity and respect when you work for the wealthiest hotelier in history.

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Kaiser Foundation Health Plan is our state's largest insurer, and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals has more hospital beds than any other system in the state. It is eminently reasonable to expect both entities to report in the same ways we require of Kaiser's competitors.

We urge the board to approve Supervisor Mar's resolution declaring the City & County's support for state Senate Bill 343.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anand Singh'.

Anand Singh
President
UNITE HERE Local 2

Anand Singh
President

Chito Cuéllar
Vice-President

Tina Chen
Secretary-Treasurer

