

[TWO CENTS]

How will the labor board decision on RNs as supervisors affect you?

THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD is expected to hand down a decision sometime this summer that could eliminate RNs' rights to form and be represented by unions by reclassifying them as supervisors. If this happens, registered nurses might no longer be protected from disciplinary action for union activity, and their ability to advocate for their patients would be compromised. We talked with CNA/NNOC RNs across the country to learn how the decision could affect them.



"I'M A CHARGE NURSE, so I'm really worried about a decision that would make me a supervisor. If I can't be a part of the union, then I'm not protected when I go out and advocate and speak out about short staffing. And if I can't advocate, then patients won't get the best possible care. That's the bottom line."

—GENEL MORGAN, RN AT MILLS-PENINSULA HEALTH SERVICES AND CNA/NNOC BOARD MEMBER, BURLINGAME, CA



"IF THEY MAKE charge nurses supervisors, then I'll resign from my charge position. But if they make all nurses supervisors, I'm going to have to find a new career. The union is why I came here. I worked in South Carolina for 19 years, and everything was so unfair. Decisions were just based on who liked who. You couldn't discuss your wages with your coworkers, and there were no patient advocacy laws."

—SHEILA ROWE, RN AT KAISER PERMANENTE, REDWOOD CITY, CA



"IF THEY SAY I can't be in the union, I would consider leaving the profession. Sometimes I feel the union contract is what makes my job doable and safe, in terms of patient safety and staff safety. Because the hospitals, they're really about money."

—CANDY DE BOER, RN AT CATHOLIC HEALTHCARE WEST, SAN FRANCISCO, CA



"IF YOU WANT to visualize what this would mean, all you have to do is look at your contract, rip it up, and let your employer make all the rules. Everything CNA and NNOC has fought for over the last 50 years would be wiped out. Gone."

—DEBORAH BURGER, RN AT KAISER PERMANENTE SANTA ROSA AND CNA/NNOC PRESIDENT, SANTA ROSA, CA



"THIS WOULD MEAN WAR between the NLRB and the nurses. If we are supervisors, that means we will have to say yes to management. And if we say yes to management, then patients are not going to be protected, and we will not be protected when we try to protect our patients. Patients are scared, too. They tell us they don't want us to disappear from the union. One sick lady at my church even said, Now it's our turn to advocate for nurses!"

—PATTY ESTEVES, RN AT KAISER PERMANENTE CALL CENTER, SAN JOSE, CA



"RNS DO NOT WANT to be supervisors because a supervisor's primary interest is the economic health of the company. The RN's primary concern is the health and welfare of the patients."

—LARRY FARVER, RN AT MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL, SACRAMENTO, CA



"ORGANIZING OF NURSES is critical to doing our jobs well. We need it to be made known that the labor board is doing this. People don't know. Nurses don't know."

—JANE CANTU, RN AT METHODIST HOSPITAL, HOUSTON, TX