

In Oregon, a state law makes it illegal for companies to require employees to attend anti-union meetings. Workers at the Northeast Portland location of the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) found out about the law. Below is the text of a May 21 email the company CEO, Doreen Granpeesheh, wrote —pleading with her own employees to come and hear her anti-union speech, two days before the union election.

Dear Portland East Employees,

I heard some of you are planning to boycott my speech today! That's very unfortunate for everyone.

In 2 days you will have an election that could alter the course of your work, your career and ultimately a big portion of your life. Don't you think it would be wise for you to know everything about the issue you are voting on? Do you really know everything you need to know about how your life might change?

I know many of you are following the few who are angry, vocal and determined to cause drastic changes. Some of you have even come to us in fear of the pro-union leaders and have told us you are annoyed but also experiencing peer pressure to vote yes.

I am writing this email to you to remind you that you should never let anyone intimidate you or pressure you into voting for something you don't believe in.

You are the only person who will look out for your own good! Nobody knows what is best for you but yourself.

Don't allow someone else to make a decision for you that will influence your life.

I am holding this meeting tonight, not because I want to influence you to vote in my favor. I am holding the meeting so that you can hear the truth about unions. There is no possible way the union folks have told you everything you need to know because they don't want you to think about the negative things that could happen. The truth is: unions are risky. The union can't promise you improvements because they don't have the ability to force improvements to happen. The only right they would have is to sit at a table and negotiate with me. That's all! I never have to agree to any proposal that I don't believe is in the best interest of the company and that is a truth you need to know.

I want you all to know that I am here tonight so that I can hear your voices because I am truly interested in helping fix the things that you are upset about. But I also want you to know that if a union enters your site, it won't be just me anymore. It could be me and a team of lawyers who may not be as interested as I am in listening to your wishes!

I can't tell you what could happen after Thursday because the union rules won't let me. But I can give you possibilities and that's what I will do in my speech tonight. I will tell you everything that could happen. Don't you want to hear the possibilities that will drastically affect your life?

I know some of you feel you have not been treated well and the only thing that makes you feel strong is this union.

What I'm telling you is that you are much stronger as individuals because I am here also as one individual and interested to learn how I can make work better for you. If you truly want better work conditions, then why aren't you coming tonight? Boycotting tonight is only for those few who are so angry that they can't have a mature, adult conversation anymore. As we saw in my last talk, there are a few therapists who are not really asking for better conditions anymore; they are just angry; so angry that they just want to cause destruction. Do you want to be part of that? At my last meeting, one therapist spoke out and even called me names. He wasn't looking for better work conditions. He had already resigned. He was just angry and wanted to express his anger at any cost. Did he change anything? No! He is now gone and you are still fighting for his cause.

Guys, if you're one of the angry ones, I understand that it may be too late for us to have an adult conversation because anger can be blinding and hinders all resolutions. So it's better if the angry few don't come.

But if you are a new therapist or if you believe there are two sides to every story, then don't let others into a vote that may not be in your best interest. Come to my talk, learn everything you need to learn, hear both sides, and make a mature, informed decision! After all, it's your life and only you should make decisions for your life.

I look forward to seeing you tonight. I will be truthful and transparent and you will learn things that are important to know before Thursday.

Dr. Doreen Granpeesheh