



AFL-CIO

AMERICA'S UNIONS

**American Federation
of Labor and
Congress of Industrial
Organizations**

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June 24, 2020

Most Rev. John F. Doerfler
Bishop of Marquette
1004 Harbor Hills Drive
Marquette, MI 49855

Dear Bishop Doerfler:

As the leader of America's largest federation of labor unions, I am extremely proud of the workers at the Bishop Noa Home who risk their lives every day to care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These workers—represented by United Steelworkers (USW) Local 2-21—feed, clothe, bathe and plan activities for some of the Upper Peninsula's most vulnerable residents.

They exemplify the compassion and mercy at the heart of Christ's ministry. And they steadfastly continue to perform their duties even as the coronavirus takes an ever-higher toll on the people who live and work in nursing homes. During this difficult time, the nurses protect the lives of their patients and defend their god-given dignity.

These workers have more than earned a fair contract. Community members know this, and that is why the workers have widespread support.

For nearly three years, however, the management at the Bishop Noa Home has dragged out negotiations—and proposed cutting benefits the workers already receive—just to punish them for organizing.

The workers adopted a flexible, creative approach to bargaining in an earnest desire to bring the talks to a prompt, amicable conclusion. The negotiating committee made numerous proposals that would have promoted labor-management collaboration and enabled the workers to provide even more excellent care.

But the management at the Bishop Noa Home spurned these heartfelt overtures and refused to budge from its own unreasonable positions, positions that seem at odds with catholic social teaching as articulated by St. Pope John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis.

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The facility's union-busting attorney belittles workers at the bargaining table—in stark contrast to the kindness they show their patients every day—and demeans the value of their life-sustaining labors. He scoffs at their request for a voice in the workplace, even though these workers know their patients better than anyone else.

At a time when America is relying on health care professionals more than ever—and praising them for the sacrifices they make—the workers at Bishop Noa only ask to be treated with the same dignity they extend to others.

I ask you to intercede with the Administration and Board at the Bishop Noa Home to ensure these workers receive a just contract providing fair wages, decent working conditions and the respect their Christian service requires.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. Trumka". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Richard L. Trumka
President

RLT/ni