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NLRB Finds E-Z Pass Firm Violated Law To Bust Union Drive

By ARI PAUL

The National Labor Relations Board ruled April 13 that the contractor for three state transportation authorities handling customer service calls and correspondence for E-Z Pass had wrongfully intimidated union supporters.

Bad-Faith Boss

The nearly 300 Xerox-Affiliated Computer Services workers at the Staten Island call center elected to join Communications Workers of America District 1 last May, but NLRB Regional Director Alvin Blyer said that the company "failed and refused to bargain collectively and in good faith with the union

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E-Z Pass Firm's Violation

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as the exclusive collective-bargaining representative of the unit."

He also ruled that management "interrogated employees regarding their protected concerted activities and gave employees the impression that their protected concerted activities were under surveillance."

The union says that the company—which has contracts with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the Thruway Authority, and the Port Authority—implemented a performance-based pay system that pays certain employers slightly more than 75 cents per call, which it says is too low, in addition to the fact that the health-care plan takes 30 percent out of each paycheck.

Disregarding the Law

"It highlights how this Xerox/ACS company has a complete disregard for labor law," said Kate Doehring, a District 1 organizer, of the ruling.

Worker Antoinette Maddocks said that the company routinely took down pro-union fliers while circulating anti-union literature, and that the company would artificially increase workloads without raising wages. She asserted this not only lowered morale but was meant to artificially decrease workers' productivity to create grounds to discipline them.

"You're giving me a quota that is way too high," she said. "It's a set-up."

Ms. Doehring said that increasing wages and improving the health-care plan would not be financially onerous, saying, "We just want decent wages and an investment in someone's future."



The Chief-Leader/Michel Friang
ANTOINETTE MADDOCKS:
Cites anti-union tactics.

Ms. Maddocks, who has been a call-center worker for six years, said that the company was thriving off the government business.

"They get bonuses for what we do," she said of the firm's managers.

The contract with the three transportation authorities includes a labor harmony clause stating that if a labor dispute comes up with the contractor then the authorities have the ability to mediate a solution. Ms. Doehring said that there has been some communication between the union and the agencies over the situation, and that the union is hoping it might take action.

"The authorities have the power to change this," she said. "They know what's going on."