

\*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 11/9/2021 - Contact: Jack Mahoney, 908-300-4271,  
jmahoney@wsrjb.org

## **Healthcare Laundry Workers file charges against Kaiser contractor Emerald Textiles**

Today, hundreds of healthcare laundry workers facing layoffs filed unfair labor practice charges against private equity-backed laundry company Emerald Textiles over the Kaiser contractor's refusal to bargain with the workers and their union. Days before Thanksgiving, the company plans to end workers' pension, health insurance, and other benefits of the union contracts.

Emerald washes linens for many major hospital clients, including dozens of Kaiser Permanente hospitals, where thousands of essential healthcare workers are on the verge of a strike for better wages and a better contract. The healthcare laundry workers are employees of Angelica Corporation, a laundry company that is being purchased by Emerald Textiles. They are members of the Western States Regional Joint Board of Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, but to date, Emerald has refused to respond to the union's requests to negotiate a transition before November 20, 2021, when the sale is expected to be finalized.

The charges filed by the union today with the National Labor Relations Board follow a judge from the same agency ordering Emerald earlier this year to rehire dozens of union members it unlawfully fired when it purchased another healthcare laundry in the Los Angeles area.

At Angelica, the employees' union contract guarantees them a pension, paid sick time, health care, health and safety provisions, and more. These benefits and protections are critical to keeping these workers and hospital patients, medical professionals, and their families and communities safe as the fight against COVID-19 continues.

"I've been at Angelica for 20 years, and I know our union contract is why employees are so happy to work here for a long time," Maria Vasquez, who has worked for 20 years at Angelica's plant in Pittsburg, CA. "It is devastating to know we could lose everything that we have accomplished through the years."

Healthcare laundry workers received no response after reaching out to Kaiser to pressure Emerald to recognize their union.

See the order filed here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15gu4bBiGxyl748cKMJhAR5dQ1Cu1uT8X/view?usp=sharing>

\* BACKGROUND \*\*

For years, California's healthcare laundry workers had won union contracts at most of their industry's major employers, including Angelica Corporation and Crothall Healthcare. Since Emerald entered the industry, they have undercut their competition by not providing the wages,

\*

benefits and protections that keep union laundry jobs safe and secure, lowering overall labor standards for the industry. After purchasing a laundry in Commerce, CA, Emerald fired dozens of laundry workers because of their union affiliation, according to a National Labor Relations Board judge ruling in June.(1) The purchase of Angelica is a dramatic escalation, which follows an announcement from Emerald's investors of an additional \$200 million of capital.(2)

*The Western States Regional Joint Board of Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, is a growing, progressive union of 10,000 workers at warehouses, commercial laundries, and other industrial jobs in California, Arizona, Nevada, and New Mexico. Website: WSRJB.org*

Notes:

(1.) See NLRB [Administrative Law Judge's Decision](#).

(2.) See PACP's [Press Release](#) on Newswire.