

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - 6/22/2021 - Contact: Jack Mahoney, 908-300-4271,  
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## **Major supplier of linens to California hospitals is ordered to hire back dozens of unlawfully fired union members**

On Tuesday, in a win for the low-wage workers who wash linens for California's hospitals, healthcare linen provider Emerald Textiles was ordered to rehire dozens of union members fired two-and-a-half years ago, with backpay, and to begin negotiations with their union.

Emerald Textiles launders and rents linens to many major hospitals across California, such as several Kaiser Permanente hospitals.

California's healthcare laundry workers have worked unseen throughout the pandemic, ensuring patients and healthcare workers have clean bedsheets, gowns, and towels every day. Latinx women working long hours at minimum wage handle soiled hospital linens in factory-like laundry facilities, day in and day out. A group of these workers has been quietly fighting back against one of the state's largest healthcare linen providers — and they're winning.

"This week's ruling is a victory for all healthcare laundry workers," said Rosalba Nolasco, one of the union members dismissed by Emerald who testified at the hearing about the case earlier this year. "We do important work, and we should not be treated this way. Hospitals should think twice before doing business with a company like Emerald."

The ruling by administrative law judge Eleanor Laws of the National Labor Relations Board upholds a complaint issued in 2019 by the federal agency's General Counsel against Emerald Textiles for multiple labor law violations, following charges filed by the union.

The workers had successfully organized with an affiliate of the Service Employees International Union, Workers United WSRJB. But in December 2018, during their first union contract negotiations, Emerald purchased the plant, fired most of the workers, replaced them with new workers, and refused to recognize their union.

Emerald Textiles launders and rents linens to many major hospitals across California, such as several Kaiser Permanente hospitals. For years, California's healthcare laundry workers had won union contracts at most of their industry's major employers, including Crothall Healthcare and Angelica Corporation. However in 2017, a pair of private equity firms began purchasing smaller non-union laundries across the state, including Emerald Textiles — which now bills itself as "the leading commercial healthcare laundry and linen service business on the West Coast." As Emerald competes without paying for the wages, health benefits, and retirement plans enjoyed by union laundry workers, their growth has lowered overall labor standards for the industry.

See the judge's decision here: <https://bit.ly/3qlkAwD>

*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](http://WSRJB.org)*