

# City of Boston In City Council

September 26, 2007

## RESOLUTION OF COUNCILOR STEPHEN J. MURPHY, *Arroyo, Turner, Tobin, Consalvo, Lefebvre, Jarcey.*

- WHEREAS** Our Boston area hospitals have a proud worldwide reputation in quality patient care and cutting edge research which we seek to preserve and advance; and
- WHEREAS** Our hospitals are the largest employer in the city, with one out of every six jobs existing in a hospital setting, and, as such, the hospital industry plays a major role in determining economic standards for the people of Boston; and
- WHEREAS** Boston faces a growing healthcare worker shortage demanding improvements in education and training, recruitment and retention: There were over 8,700 Boston healthcare jobs that went unfilled in 2005. It is anticipated that by 2010 there will be 14,000 Boston area healthcare job openings within 11 hard-to-fill healthcare job categories which will require at least some form of post-secondary training. However, Boston area institutions awarded only 816 associate's degrees in healthcare fields in 2002; and
- WHEREAS** The effectiveness of training efforts can be enhanced when healthcare worker unions and hospital management work together to identify shortages, apply for grants, develop collaborative education programs and motivate caregivers to participate in such programs; and
- WHEREAS** One of the best ways to recruit and retain qualified staff is by improving working conditions and the sense of empowerment that can come through unionization; and
- WHEREAS** Many hospital workers have expressed an interest in unionizing to gain a voice so they are better able to deliver quality care, make their hospitals the best they can be, advocate for their patients' interests, engage civically in healthcare policy, and lift the standard of living for themselves, their children and their co-workers; and
- WHEREAS** Campaigns by management against unionization can cause tension in the workplace and use precious hospital resources while detracting from the mission of the healthcare institution; and
- WHEREAS** Boston's hospitals receive taxpayer funding, as well as tax exemptions with the expectation that they play a responsible civic role and that patient care is the first fiscal priority;
- WHEREAS** Many healthcare employers and unions throughout the U.S. have adopted codes of conduct creating a more positive atmosphere and process for caregivers to elect whether to join together as a union; and
- WHEREAS** The decision of whether to unionize belongs solely to workers, and should not be interfered with by hospital management or their agents; and

- WHEREAS** Because of the inherent power imbalance between management of large institutions and workers, management "campaigning" against employee efforts to unionize has an inherently un-democratic effect; **Therefore Be It**
- RESOLVED** That the Boston City Council calls on the city's hospitals to refrain from any interference in the efforts of hospital workers to form unions; **And Be It Further**
- RESOLVED** That the Boston City Council declares its own support for the adoption of Free and Fair union election principals, similar to those that have been adopted by many major hospitals and health systems in other U.S. cities, which establish the commitment that workers are "free" to make up their own mind, under "fair" voting conditions; **And Be It Further**
- RESOLVED** That the Boston City Council calls on the city's hospitals to sign onto the "Free and Fair" union election principals authored by hospital workers and community members, and negotiate formal written commitments based on those principles; **And Be It Further**
- RESOLVED** That the Boston City Council calls on the city's hospitals to embark on a process of working with their caregivers collectively through the organizations they may choose to represent them, to make our hospitals the very best they can be for patients and caregivers alike, as they continue to be a source of pride for our city.

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