

22 arrested during casino union protest in Vegas - Las Vegas Sun

Written by Administrator
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The Associated Press

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Station Casinos Inc. is defending itself against allegations of being anti-union after 750 Culinary Union members gathered to protest the company, saying it has used threats and intimidation to keep workers from organizing

at its Las Vegas-area properties.

The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported 22 people were arrested at Thursday's protest at the Palace Station hotel-casino. Police said they were blocking the entrance to the property just west of the Las Vegas Strip.

"I'm willing to be arrested," said Jeanette Hill, a 32-year employee of the Flamingo hotel-casino and one of the 22 arrested. "I'm out here to fight for equal rights for all workers."

Station Casinos denied being anti-union and called the protest a media stunt.

The union has been trying to organize nearly 13,000 Station Casinos employees in the Las Vegas area. It accuses the casino operator of trying to prevent workers from joining.

The company is facing allegations of unfair labor practices from the National Labor Relations Board.

Company spokeswoman Lori Nelson says Station Casinos recognizes employee rights to a union if they choose.

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"It is disingenuous for the Culinary Union to try to convince the community that we are anti-union when the truth is we're pro-employee."

Nelson declined to comment on the federal labor complaint, saying the case was still in progress. A hearing is scheduled to resume Feb. 28, and is expected to last several months.

The casino company is expected to begin defending itself to the board in a few weeks.

The complaint alleges Station used threats, bribery, intimidation, surveillance, discrimination and other measures against employees trying to organize around the union.

"A Nevada gaming company like Station Casinos should not use divide-and-conquer tactics to prevent its workers from joining unions," said Geoconda Arguello Kline, president of Culinary Local 226.

Nelson said the protest was a media stunt _ a continuation of "corporate harassment campaigns that have been going on for years."

Dawn Vaseur, a cocktail waitress who has worked at Santa Fe Station for 10 years, said workers are hoping the union can represent them.

"We are here to notify Station Casinos that we are not giving up until they respect us and sit down with us and give us a contract," she said.

Information from: Las Vegas Review-Journal, <http://www.lvrj.com>

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