

## Pro-union hourly workers picket Rivers Casino

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 23 April 2015 18:20 -

---

Hourly workers at Pittsburgh's Rivers Casino marched closer to forming a union on Thursday, as they picketed outside the North Shore property and attempted to deliver a petition to top executives.

After two years of efforts, the Steel City Casino Workers Council said it has collected signatures of more than two-thirds of the casino's roughly 800 hospitality employees. Members of the organizing committee said they slipped copies of the petition beneath locked doors outside the casino's executive offices.

"The message is there," said Hannah Taleb, 26, of the North Side, who has worked for nearly three years as a slots attendant.

Patrons using valet service arrived to find on their left the casino, with its main entrance cloaked in large signs reading "Voted Best Place to Work" from a 2014 employee survey conducted by the Pittsburgh Business Times. To their right, around 100 protestors carried pickets and chanted in unison.

Joining off-duty Rivers workers in the protest were other local labor unions, including Unite Here, Teamsters and Steelworkers, local pro-labor community groups and workers from Rivers Casino Des Plaines outside Chicago and SugarHouse Casino in Philadelphia.

City Councilwoman Darlene Harris also marched.

"When the casinos wanted to come to Pittsburgh, they promised the moon and green shoes," Harris said. "These people have a right to organize. They deserve fair wages and hospitalization."

"Rivers Casino is proud to have been voted one of Pittsburgh's 'Best Places to Work' by our team members, and we respect their rights to choose whether to be represented by a union," said casino spokesman Jack Horner. "So far, the majority of our team members have chosen to

## Pro-union hourly workers picket Rivers Casino

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 23 April 2015 18:20 -

---

remain independent.”

This was at least the fourth picket outside Rivers since Steel City Casino Workers Council formed in April 2013 in an effort to create a labor union for hourly employees that provide hospitality services – a group that includes food and beverage staff, cashiers, valets, janitors, maintenance workers and others.

Their effort does not include management, table-game dealers or security personnel. Rivers employs around 1,700 people; it calls them team members.

About two dozen maintenance workers last month became Rivers' first unionized workforce. They elected Greenfield-based International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 95, as their collective-bargaining representative, according to the National Labor Relations Board.

No such elections are on the horizon for the Casino Workers Council, said spokesman Jon Scolnik.

“It's time for this casino to make a choice – to either respect workers' rights or to continue this conflict,” Scolnik said. “We are going to keep fighting. But overall, things are not moving in the right direction.”

The NLRB's Pittsburgh Regional Office scheduled a hearing for June regarding allegations that a manager in November interrogated and threatened employees about their union membership.

In 2011 and 2013, NLRB officials cited Rivers for other issues involving unionization attempts.

For Taleb, the slots attendant, forming a union means making Rivers a better place to work by creating more equitable pay, improving workplace policies and establishing job security.

## Pro-union hourly workers picket Rivers Casino

Written by Administrator  
Thursday, 23 April 2015 18:20 -

---

"I am a good employee," Taleb said. "But the reality about Rivers is that anyone could lose their job any day."

Jason Cato is a writer for Trib Total Media. Reach him at 412-320-7936 or [jcato@tribweb.com](mailto:jcato@tribweb.com).

[Subscribe today! Click here for our subscription offers.](#)  
**TribLive commenting policy**

You are solely responsible for your comments and by using TribLive.com you agree to our [Terms of Service](#).

We moderate comments. Our goal is to provide substantive commentary for a general readership. By screening submissions, we provide a space where readers can share intelligent and informed commentary that enhances the quality of our news and information.

While most comments will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive, moderating decisions are subjective. We will make them as carefully and consistently as we can. Because of the volume of reader comments, we cannot review individual moderation decisions with readers.

We value thoughtful comments representing a range of views that make their point quickly and politely. We make an effort to protect discussions from repeated comments — either by the same reader or different readers.

We follow the same standards for taste as the daily newspaper. A few things we won't tolerate: personal attacks, obscenity, vulgarity, profanity (including expletives and letters followed by dashes), commercial promotion, impersonations, incoherence, proselytizing and SHOUTING. Don't include URLs to Web sites.

We do not edit comments. They are either approved or deleted. We reserve the right to edit a

## Pro-union hourly workers picket Rivers Casino

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 23 April 2015 18:20 -

---

comment that is quoted or excerpted in an article. In this case, we may fix spelling and punctuation.

We welcome strong opinions and criticism of our work, but we don't want comments to become bogged down with discussions of our policies and we will moderate accordingly.

We appreciate it when readers and people quoted in articles or blog posts point out errors of fact or emphasis and will investigate all assertions. But these suggestions should be sent [via e-mail](#).

To avoid distracting other readers, we won't publish comments that suggest a correction. Instead, corrections will be made in a blog post or in an article.

**Read more** [http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&ct2=us&usg=AFQjCNH-glqxLvjFOdE5Kzh\\_2puTFRGjCA&clid=c3a7d30bb8a4878e06b80cf16b898331&ei=g2g6VfiWFYXL3QHw-YHoDg&url=http://triblive.com/news/alleggheny/8231869-74/casino-rivers-workers](http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&ct2=us&usg=AFQjCNH-glqxLvjFOdE5Kzh_2puTFRGjCA&clid=c3a7d30bb8a4878e06b80cf16b898331&ei=g2g6VfiWFYXL3QHw-YHoDg&url=http://triblive.com/news/alleggheny/8231869-74/casino-rivers-workers)