

Vote “NO” on the sellout contract at Stanford! Throw out the bargaining committee and elect a new one committed to fight for what nurses need!

Stanford Nurses Rank-and-File Strike Committee
30 April 2022

Less than a week since the start of our strike, the Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA) abruptly announced a tentative agreement that ignores our most basic demands for adequate staffing levels, an end to exhausting workloads and substantial wage increases to protect our livelihoods from record high inflation.

To add insult to injury, CRONA is demanding we vote on this sellout agreement on Sunday. This will not give us sufficient time to study and discuss a 55-page contract, which will determine the conditions of our work lives for the next three years.

The Stanford Nurses Rank-and-File Committee calls on all nurses to vote “No” and campaign among their coworkers for the biggest rejection possible. We have suffered through more than two years of the pandemic, risking our lives while Stanford Health Care made record profits. We did not go on strike to accept an agreement that provides no protections against burnout and will result in an actual cut in real income.

On staffing, the proposal only binds the hospital to follow state law for minimum staffing, which the governor has repeatedly waived at the behest of the health care giants. Rather than forcing Stanford to hire more nurses—and provide good pay and working conditions to retain them—the contract would establish yet another “staffing committee.” This committee, which top management gets to select, will make “recommendations,” which the hospital can ignore.

On mental health, the company offers \$1,000 to cover the cost of therapy if we are on the company health care program. Last week, a nurse at Kaiser committed suicide while on shift at the ER. A similar tragedy occurred last

year at Stanford when we lost one of our coworkers. The contract agreed to by CRONA includes a \$1,000 voucher for therapy. This is an absolute insult to nurses and the memory of our lost coworkers.

With inflation at 8.5 percent and expected to continue to rise, the proposal for a 5 percent raise (with a 2 percent increase in December 2022) would result in a major pay cut. The cost of rent, food and gas are all going up, making life in the Bay Area even more expensive than it already is.

After keeping us in the dark about its negotiations with management and the federal mediator, CRONA sent us an email Saturday with the supposed “highlights” of the deal. We only received the full text of the deal after rank-and-file nurses repeatedly demanded it. If this were a good contract, CRONA would not have tried to conceal it from the membership and rushed through a vote without giving us sufficient time to carefully read and discuss it.

At the informational meetings, CRONA President Colleen Borges ignored nurses who cited the union’s own bylaws, which prohibit a ratification vote on a weekend or holiday. CRONA officials told us the rushed vote was necessary because the hospital needs us back, and that if our units need us, we can cross the picket lines and work with scabs.

Which side is CRONA on? If we are hurting the hospital, the time is now to press forward to win our demands. Instead, the union is throwing in the towel. And by telling nurses to work without a contract during a strike, they are telling us to be scabs. CRONA officials keep saying at informational meetings that they will “see us Tuesday” as if the deal was already passed. Excuse us, we will not be blackmailed and bullied into voting for a

deal that gives everything to management and nothing to us!

The CRONA leadership has pledged its full support to this rotten agreement. Page three of the TA states: “No CRONA officer or member of the Executive Board or Negotiating Committee shall advocate against ratification of the Tentative Agreement” and that Stanford management and CRONA shall issue a joint statement “encouraging Nurses to vote for ratification.”

Borges and other CRONA officials have denounced and threatened rank-and-file nurses for getting in the way of their arrangement with management. At one informational meeting, the CRONA president said, “You vote no on this and then we have to keep striking, and then we have to go to the hospital and say that our membership didn’t like it, and the hospital will say, ‘Well, shouldn’t you have known what the membership wanted?’ And then CRONA is going to lose a lot of authority with the hospital.”

We couldn’t care less what management thinks about the CRONA leadership. Borges & Co. may have told them we would swallow this deal, but rank-and-file nurses have something to say about that. CRONA is far more concerned with impressing hospital management than they are in meeting the needs of nurses who have been risking our lives during the pandemic.

Could there be any more proof of why we must take the conduct of this struggle into our own hands?

That is why we have formed the Stanford Nurses Rank-and-File Committee. This is what we propose:

1) Demand a delay on the vote until Wednesday, May 4! We must have time to read the contract and discuss it democratically before casting our ballots!

2) If CRONA ignores our demands, we urge nurses to campaign among their friends and coworkers for a “No” vote on this deal. We encourage nurses to post videos and comments on social media using the hashtag #StanfordNursesVoteNo.

3) Rank-and-file nurses must oversee the vote counting. Based on the undemocratic way CRONA has tried to force this contract through, we do not trust that they will accurately count the votes without democratic oversight.

4) Inform all nurses not to return to work! CRONA said Saturday that we should go back to work now because “the hospital needs us.” This is an appeal for nurses to scab on each other! The entire point of a strike is to stay out and stay united!

5) Throw out the bargaining committee and call immediate elections for a new bargaining committee, elected by the rank and file.

6) Broaden the strike! Reach out to nurses you know at all other hospitals: 8,000 Sutter nurses are working under an expired contract; 19,000 Kaiser workers have a contract coming up August 31; 2,000 workers at Cedars-Sinai will strike on May 9; 3,700 nurses at Tenet Healthcare are working under a contract that will expire on June 30. We are fighting the same fight, we should all be striking at once!

7) Adequate strike pay for nurses! We are fighting for all nurses and therefore the resources of CRONA, the California Nurses Association and all the unions must be made available to us to sustain this battle.

8) No ratification of a contract unless it includes the demands that nurses and our families need. This includes:

- A 15 percent wage increase each year of the contract.
- Monthly cost-of-living adjustments to counteract inflation.
- Hire thousands of new nurses to guarantee nurse-to-patient ratios, including 1:1 for the ICU, 1:2 for the IICU and 1:3 for Medsurge.

If we take a stand, we will win the support we need to take on Stanford Health Care and the Silicon Valley executives and billionaires on its corporate board. Workers everywhere are fed up with eroding living standards, unbearable working conditions and record high corporate profits. Strikes are taking place among workers across the Bay Area, including 600 oil workers at Chevron and thousands of teachers in Oakland. Strikes and mass protests are taking place all over the world against the rising cost of living, including in Sri Lanka, Sudan, Peru and many other countries. Nurses are currently on strike around the world, on all continents, all protesting over the same issues as us.

We must join this growing world movement for social equality. That’s why we have founded the Stanford Nurses Rank-and-File Committee, which will allow us to share information, democratically discuss our demands, plan common action and fight for the broadest unity possible to win our strike.

To contact our committee, phone or text: 216-245-7052. You can also email: Stanfordstrikingnurse@gmail.com



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)