

Skagit Valley Hospital, Decision 11442 (PECB, 2012)

STATE OF WASHINGTON

BEFORE THE PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

In the matter of the petition of:

WASHINGTON STATE NURSES
ASSOCIATION

Involving certain employees of:

SKAGIT VALLEY HOSPITAL
(SKAGIT COUNTY PUBLIC HOSPITAL
DISTRICT 1)

CASE 24973-E-12-3733

DECISION 11442 - PECB

DIRECTION OF CROSS-CHECK

On July 10, 2012, Washington State Nurses Association filed a petition seeking certification as exclusive bargaining representative of certain employees of Skagit Valley Hospital. An investigation conference was conducted by telephone conference call on August 6, 2012. The only matter the parties disagreed about was the method to determine the question concerning representation. The dispute concerning methodology was referred to the Executive Director.

ISSUE

The sole issue to be determined at this time is whether use of the cross-check method is appropriate in this case. The union stated a preference for a cross-check, while the employer objected to the use of the cross-check procedure. A cross-check is appropriate in this case.

APPLICABLE LEGAL PRINCIPLES

RCW 41.56.060 sets forth the methods for determining questions concerning representation:

The Commission shall determine the bargaining representative by (a) examination of organization membership rolls, (b) comparison of signatures on organization

bargaining authorization cards, or (c) by conducting an election specifically therefore.

The Commission's rules limit the availability of the "cross-check" procedure, as follows:

WAC 391-25-391 SPECIAL PROVISION--PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

(1) Where *only one organization is seeking certification* as the representative of unrepresented employees, and the showing of interest submitted in support of the petition indicates that the *organization has been authorized by in excess of seventy percent of the employees* to act as their representative for the purposes of collective bargaining, the executive director may issue a direction of cross-check.

(2) A direction of cross-check and other rulings in the proceedings up to the issuance of a tally are interim orders, and may only be appealed to the commission by objections under WAC 391-25-590 after the cross-check. An exception is made for rulings on whether the employer or employees are subject to the jurisdiction of the commission, which may be appealed under WAC 391-25-660.

(emphasis added). The general preference for elections occasionally expressed by employers is not sufficient to disregard the statute and rule.

In *City of Redmond*, Decision 1367-A (PECB, 1982) and numerous subsequent decisions, the Commission and the Executive Director have refused to ignore the cross-check option (or to write it out of the statute).

ANALYSIS

The wording on the authorization cards submitted as the showing of interest in this case clearly indicate that, by signing the card, the employee wishes to be represented by the Washington State Nurses Association for the purposes of collective bargaining. Just as people can be expected to attach importance to checks, contracts, and other documents they sign in the course of their personal business affairs, employees can be expected to read and give importance to authorization cards they sign for a union.

Examination of the case file indicates that the union submitted a showing of interest in excess of the 70 percent required by WAC 391-25-391. If employees desire to withdraw their authorization cards in advance of a cross-check, the procedure for doing so is detailed in WAC 391-25-410(2). An amended Investigation Statement will be prepared and posted in the employer's workplace informing employees that the question concerning representation will be resolved by cross-check and that they will have the opportunity to withdraw their authorization card for purposes of cross-check.

NOW, THEREFORE, it is

ORDERED

1. The employer shall immediately supply the Commission with copies of documents from its employment records which bear the signatures of the employees on the eligibility list stipulated by the parties.
2. A cross-check of records shall be made by the staff of the Public Employment Relations Commission in the appropriate bargaining unit to determine whether a majority of the employees in that bargaining unit have authorized the Washington State Nurses Association, to represent them for purposes of collective bargaining.

Issued at Olympia, Washington, on the 9th day of August, 2012.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS COMMISSION

MICHAEL P. SELLARS, Executive Director

This order may be appealed by filing timely objections with the Commission pursuant to WAC 391-25-590.