

MANAGEMENT AND WORKERS OF MARDI GRAS CASINO ON COLLISION COURSE DESPITE LABOR BOARD INTERVENTION



The federal board has blamed the management of Hallandale Beach's Mardi Gras Casino of "unfair labor practices" that infringed on the workers' rights to form a union. It has demanded the reinstatement of ten workers that the Casino had fired last November. The workers filed a formal legal complaint, charging the management for using coercive and intimidating tactics to prevent them from forming a union. The workers said that the management responded to their attempts to form a union, with undisguised resentment, threatening employees with retaliation, cross-examining workers who they felt were sympathetic towards the union formation cause. In a last ditch attempt to prevent the formation of a union, the management, allegedly, even offered a pay hike, if they abandoned their cause. Desirous of getting wage increment and more-affordable health insurance, the workers had floated an idea to form an employees union, knowing full well that their employers might not approve of their idea. Steven Wetstein, 58, who was working as a line cook said, "I really believe in unions. People need more job security, better wages, and better health benefits." So obsessed was he with the idea that he joined 14 other workers, in serving on the union leadership committee. They were in for a rude shock when the management fired them from their jobs. Theresa Muse, after five years of working as a slots-area floor attendant, alleged that her salary was reduced from \$10 an hour to \$8 an hour, with the supervisors saying that they made enough money in tips. The then Manager, Muse said, told her, that "if we didn't like it, to just hit the door. Whatever we make, we deserve; we work very hard for it." A federal agency, focused on worker rights, upon investigations of the complaint, agreed with the employees who had been fired and accused the casino of trying to illegally bust their attempts to form a union. The federal board has asked the Casino management to re-hire the workers with full back wages and to put into practice policies that are more liberal and open-minded of union organization efforts by workers. The policies must include posting of an employee rights poster, in English and translated versions in Spanish and Haitian Creole, for their migrant workers, who are not well-versed in the English language. Moreover, the Board has asked the Casino management to supply the union organizers with names and addresses of its current employees and "reasonable access" to workplace bulletin boards. Mardi Gras Vice President Dan Adkins refused to comment on the issue only saying that, "my attorneys are handling it." Mardi Grass sots attendant Tashana McKenzie termed the federal involvement as "a huge victory for me personally, for our organizing at Mardi Gras and for any worker who is strong enough to stand up for what she believes." The matter will be heard by an administrative law judge, in a hearing set for June 25. The issue could be resolved amicably between the management and the workers; as such disputes are prone to be settled, especially after the federal labor board gets involved. However, Mardi Gras could also decide to fight the accusations in court. Looking for Project Management jobs? [Click here](#).