



Local 459

**838 Louisa Street
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Red Cross Found Guilty

In June 2010, the employees of the American Red Cross Great Lakes Region and Mid Michigan Chapter went on a three-day strike. They alleged that the Red Cross was engaging in unfair labor practices. A decision just issued by a federal judge has confirmed their beliefs.

Administrative Law Judge Jeffrey Wedekind ruled May 5, 2011 that the American Red Cross violated the National Labor Relations Act when it:

- Refused to provide information necessary for negotiations
- Implemented a "no fault" attendance policy without bargaining
- Refused to allow the employees to continue to use rooms for union meetings
- Changed or eliminated the retiree health care program without bargaining
- Changed or eliminated the 401 (k) savings program without bargaining
- Changed or eliminated the pension plan without bargaining
- Changed the health insurance without bargaining
- Did not bargain over moving work to another state
- Disciplined a union steward for exercising her union rights
- Told a union steward not to talk to employees
- Denied annual leave and guaranteed hours to employees after the strike

The employees are represented by the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 459 and Teamsters Local 580. An 11-day trial was held last fall. The federal judge upheld all of the above charges and issued an order for the Red Cross to remedy all violations with back pay and interest and to post a notice notifying employees that the Red Cross will not break the law in the future.

The Red Cross is embroiled in contentious labor relations around the country. There are more than 30 expired union contracts nationally and similar unfair labor practice charges are pending in a number of states.

The Red Cross is also under attack for its safety practices. Over the years, it has been fined \$37 million by the FDA (most recently \$16 million in June 2010) for violating a long-standing federal consent decree.

Dozens of labor unions representing Red Cross employees, including Local 459, have formed a coalition to advocate for better safety and employee rights. The coalition is supported by groups outside the labor movement such as the National Consumers League, Jobs with Justice, Interfaith Workers Justice, the Hemophilia Foundation of America and the Committee of Ten Thousand.

The 49-page decision can be found at: <http://www.nlr.gov/search/nlrdocsearch/7-ca-52033> or by calling Local 459.

ABOUT OPEIU

The Office and Professional Employees International Union represents more than 110,000 members (representing 125,000 employees) in the United States, Puerto Rico and Canada. OPEIU represents employees and independent contractors in banking and credit unions, insurance, higher education, shipping, hospitals, medical clinics, utilities, transportation, hotels, administrative offices and more.

Professional organizations and Guilds affiliated with OPEIU are a diverse group that includes physicians, pharmacists, chiropractors, appraisers, podiatrists, clinical social workers, hypnotists, teachers and helicopter pilots.