Union Pride!

The Little Big Union was proud to march through the rainbow clad streets of downtown with our fellow queer workers on June 16, in this year’s Portland Pride Parade. LBU stood alongside our friends in the fast-food struggle, the Burgerville Workers Union, as well as the larger Oregon Labor Movement contingency, which was composed of a coalition organized by the AFL-CIO, Unite Here, and other Oregon unions. We march because we know that queer rights are worker rights are human rights. When queer workers at any workplace are discriminated against, picked on, harassed, fired, or otherwise treated with disrespect, it is up to our co-workers standing together in solidarity with one another to make our workplaces safer. We also march because we remember that Pride was founded at Stonewall, when gay and trans folks took direct action to fight back against police violence. Love and solidarity to all LGBTQI+ workers!

Worker Story: “Respect Pronouns” Poster Goes Missing

At the Little Big Burger Alberta store, workers made a list of each employee’s name with their preferred pronoun and a gentle reminder to use the correct pronouns. But when upper management came into the store, the list and each piece of art in the lobby and back of house were torn down. Roughly a week later one of the upper management team members came back to the store and Alberta Associate Emily asked why they took down our pronouns list and if it was alright to put only the poster back up. The upper manager’s response was immediate denial, followed by a statement claiming the pronouns poster isn’t work related. Emily explained that being respectful to your coworkers’ identity is work related, but this was also brushed off. Despite denying it the general manager then stated “well if we put up that poster here, we would have to do it at every store.” Lots of schools and workplaces are required to ask each person their preferred pronouns, to which they scoffed and said “well we don’t.” Unfortunately, the conversation ended in defeat and them congratulating themselves by telling me that at least they didn’t throw any of our art or pronouns list away, instead it’s all still in a pile in a drawer somewhere.

A week later I asked a different member of upper management about another “respect pronouns” poster that was put up and taken down. This manager had already heard about the previous conversation, and I still received a similar but even more dismissive response of “well why would you even need a pronoun list anyway?”. The multiple interactions with several different higher ups opened my eyes to the way Little Big Burger management really views “positivity” in practice. Whilst preaching about how we are a family, how we need to care for and respect each other, they repeatedly disrespected me and the workers of my store—particularly queer workers. We refuse to stand for this kind of treatment. That’s why we’re union.

Get Out the Vote!

Elections are coming! Ballots are being mailed out to workers’ homes on July 1 and are being tallied July 23. The Little Big Union has fought hard for fair elections for workers at 12 LBB Stores in Portland and the surrounding suburbs. After a National Labor Relations Board hearing, the federal government ruled in favor of the union’s proposed election plan because corporate’s proposal caused “undue hardship” for workers, otherwise known as making it more difficult to turnout workers. Corporate’s proposals were an array of anti-democratic absurdities ranging from workers getting a 2-hour window to vote during PSU finals week, to voting inside the trailer of U-Haul baking in the sun, to the entirety of Portland workers having to share a single voting booth at the Lloyd Center location (one with extremely limited street parking). We think a mail-in election is much easier, fairer, and accessible. As Oregonians it’s how we vote for ballot initiatives, governor, congress, and the president. This is something our state is proud of. Mail-in ballots are also known to increase voter participation, minimize electioneering, and avoid pressure from anti-union bosses and paid “HR consultants.

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