

3

To read on behalf of Paul Kane, security officer at Harvard University

My name is Paul Kane. I am a security officer at Harvard university, and a member of SEIU Local 32 BJ District 615.

In my 12 years in the security industry, I have worked for 4 different security contractors, Pinkerton, Securitas, SSI , and AlliedBarton.

This experience (of working for many different security companies) is not uncommon for security officers. In this industry big companies acquire smaller companies and clients, to borrow a labor term, flip security contracts all the time.

At no point during any of these transitions did I have the guarantee of a job, until we won the right to collectively bargain with our bosses and we won that job security in our first contract. I cannot begin to express the feelings of helplessness and uncertainty during those times of transition.

When a new security contractor outbid our union company in 2009, they were under no legal obligation to honor our union contract. But with the strength of our union behind us, we were able to negotiate with them to keep our jobs and the standards we had fought for.

During the process of negotiating a transition agreement they attempted to impose many draconic rules and regulations that would have drastically changed our working conditions. In the end, we were able to negotiate an agreement that was more balanced.

Twice within the following two years, our employer tried to give us an expensive sub-par health plan. And both times we rallied to get the health plan we wanted.

The difference between being union and non-union is night and day. A voice in the work place is worth more than its weight in gold.

As a result of collective bargaining with our employer, we now earn a living wage, we have access to affordable healthcare, and we can sleep easier at night knowing we will have a job to go to the next day.

I've recently gotten married and had my first child. Because I have a union job, I have stability and am able to live the life I have always wanted to live. And because I can survive on one job, I can spend more time with my family.

The workers at Cambridge College deserve the same, as do all workers.

Kathleen Collins