That’s how Multnomah County Commissioner and emergency room physician Sharon Meieran’s characterized Providence’s refusal to sign an enforceable agreement that reflects the **ONA COVID-19 Nurse Bill of Rights**.

Commissioner Meieran joined dozens of ONA nurses and community supporters last Friday for an event outside Providence Portland Medical Center. She shared her thoughts on why nurses and patients need Providence to sign a statewide COVID-19 safety agreement. The event also featured remarks from ONA PPMC Chair Richard Botterill, ONA President Lynda Pond, and AFL-CIO President Graham Trainor.

ONA Providence nurses also attempted to handoff more than 1,500 Bill of Rights cards signed by nurses to Providence executives, but the execs failed to show. Instead, Providence sent a threatening letter to ONA attempting to stop our event. It is disappointing that company
executives seem more invested in silencing nurses than responding to community demands for nurse and patient safety.

Multiple news outlets covered the event, including OPB, Willamette Week, KATU, and Fox 12. Throughout the coverage, media outlets noted the recent revelations that Providence executives chose to vaccinate themselves and wealthy donors ahead of seniors, teachers, and even frontline health care workers. Apparently, Providence claimed that these non-patient facing individuals where somehow included in the Oregon Health Authority’s definition of “healthcare workers.” The Oregon Health Authority disagreed.

Sadly, Providence executives are doing the company no favors in rebuilding public trust during a critical moment. As the actual providers of care to the public, ONA nurses believe Providence can rebuild that trust, simply by signing a COVID-19 safety agreement (MOU) which aligns Providence with other major union hospitals including OHSU and Kaiser.

Despite Providence executives’ odd claims that their current patchwork of benefits aligns with our Bill of Rights, we will continue to fight for an enforceable agreement which provides Emergency Paid leave from Day 1 for any nurse who is sick with COVID-19 or is required to quarantine at home. This is a benefit included in the standard being set by other hospitals such as OHSU, and we believe that Providence nurses and their patients deserve the same or better protections. Providence’s continued insistence that ONA nurses use their own sick time first or go into PTO debt time is shameful.

Our community supporters aren’t backing down either, because they know that our working conditions are synonymous with the patient conditions faced by the public. Click here to read the letter sent to Providence executives — which is signed by an impressive list of local elected, academic, nonprofit, and faith leaders — calling on Providence to finally choose people not profits.

Missed the event? Check out photos and video of the event and SHARE to show your support!

- Facebook Live Video
- Facebook Photo Gallery
- Twitter coverage

If you have any questions, please contact your ONA labor representative or visit the ONA Providence systemwide updates webpage here.