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State Plaza Hotel impedes unionization

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A Foggy Bottom hotel GW recommends to parents visiting campus was charged with violating federal labor laws Aug. 25.

The State Plaza Hotel located on F Street between 21st and 22nd streets was found guilty of coercing employees to oppose its workers' recent unionization attempt. According to court documents, the State Plaza management fired the employee who was leading the unionization fight and delayed negotiations to break up the union.

Jen Shykula, the director of organizing for the Local 25 Restaurant and Hotel Union, said they are planning to ask GW to remove the hotel from the list.

"We would hope that GW wouldn't condone behavior that the federal court has recognized as illegal," Shykula said. "Instead, we encourage them to support more honorable companies."

She said that if GW were to remove the State Plaza from the parents' recommendation list, it might force the hotel management to come to an agreement with employees more quickly.

Workers at the hotel claim their efforts to unionize have been met with threats from the management since they began considering unionization in 2003. The National Labor Relations Board placed the State Plaza under surveillance after ruling that hotel management was illegally thwarting employee efforts to unionize.

"A fair appraisal of the evidence shows that (the State Plaza Hotel) resorted to every illicit means to thwart the employees' union support," Karl H. Buschmann, administrative law judge for the National Labor Relations Board, wrote in his decision.

The hotel was ordered to take back the pay raises it offered employees in an attempt to dissuade unionization. The court also decided that the hotel needed to reimburse all employees their union fees for the last three years.

Rodney Johnson, director of the Office of Parent Services said he was unaware of the court's decision.

"The State Plaza is on the list of recommended hotels because they gave favorable rates and because GW parents want to stay there," he said.

Johnson said there is no reason to take any sort of action against the State Plaza Hotel until the University recognizes it has acted illegally.

All of the hotel's rooms are currently booked for Colonials Weekend Oct. 20 through 22.

The hotel management refused to comment on the NLRB's decision.

State Plaza employee Ana Majano said she and other employees are held to unrealistic standards and cannot afford health insurance for their families.

"Everyday it gets worse, and we are under more pressure daily, but I would never think of leaving," Majano, a housekeeper, said through a Spanish-speaking interpreter provided by the Local 25 Union. "I will stay and fight for myself and my co-workers until we obtain our contract."

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