



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
CUNA MUTUAL GROUP RETALIATES AGAINST UNION CHIEF STEWARD**

Madison, WI – On Tuesday, March 14, 2023, CUNA Mutual Group (CMG) management issued notice of immediate suspension and investigation of Joe Evica, Chief Steward for the Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 39, the Union at CMG. CMG has not provided detailed information on Evica’s alleged infractions, vaguely stating the matter is “disclosure of company information”. CMG has retained the services of anti-union law firm Ogletree and Deakins.

“What the company is doing is a transparent and desperate effort to retaliate against Joe and our Union for standing strong and fighting for a contract that we deserve,” said videographer and union member Will Roberts.

OPEIU 39 and CMG have been negotiating a successor labor agreement since early 2022. The previous collective bargaining agreement expired March 31st, 2022. In February 2023, the Union filed Unfair Labor Practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), claiming that CMG was unlawfully obstructing the bargaining process and refusing to meet with the Union. Additionally, the Union charged that CMG was violating the NLRB’s “joint employer” standard through its employment of hundreds of contractors performing work identical to the Union’s.

Evica’s discipline followed a meeting and poll held by the Union on March 9th on whether the members would authorize collective action to protest Unfair Labor Practices and bring the Employer back to the bargaining table. The Union is also supporting resolutions 371 at the Dane County Board and 76645 at the Madison Common Council, which are scheduled for votes March 16th and March 21st respectively.

“CMG has created a powder keg by doing this to Joe,” said Sarah Larsen, an Administrative Specialist and member of the Union’s bargaining committee, “They’ve united the union’s membership more strongly than ever behind getting the contract we deserve. This retaliation will publicly make CMG look terrible and sully the image of their new brand, TruStage.”

In response, the Union has filed additional charges with the NLRB and released a public petition, available: <https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/hands-off-joe-stop-retaliation-against-opeiu-39-chief-steward-joe-evica> The petition demands immediate cessation of retaliatory tactics; a neutral third party investigator; and protection of confidential union communications from management.

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