

Wednesday, July 21, 1999
Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations
Hearing on
"Union Democracy: Government Supervision of the Hotel Employees
& Restaurant Employees International Union (HEREIU)"

Testimony for:
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My name is Pablo Garcia and I have been a banquet waiter in Chicago for 10 years. In that time I have become familiar with both the service industry and my local of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union. I think there are few people in the city who know as much as I do about my local.

As an immigrant who has become a citizen of the United States, I want to tell you how proud I am of the opportunity to speak before such distinguished representatives. I am a working person, and English is not my first language, so I hope you will bear with me and trust me that even if my speech is not sophisticated, I speak with great passion for the condition of the working people in my union.

The leadership of my Local is composed of people who do not have the slightest interest in representing members. They are people Ed and Tom Hanley decided to reward with jobs that require no work. This is not my opinion. Early on, when I first became interested in participating in my union, I got to know the leaders of the local I even became friends with them. I eventually became disenchanted and suspicious of the Hanleys. After the federal government threw them out of the union, I thought this was the time to build a new union. But the current leaders told me nothing would change because they owe their loyalty to the Hanleys and they do what the Hanleys tell them. That was when I became a reformer.

So you see, even though the Hanleys were thrown out of the union, nothing has really changed. The current leaders, led by President Terry Maloney, run the Local according to the Hanleys.

Distinguished representatives, I want you to think for a moment what it must be like to clean 15 rooms a day, five days a week and earn about \$15,000 a year. Then think about how the Hanleys and Terry Maloney live off the dues of these hardworking people even though investigation after investigation points to criminal activity by the Hanley machine. And yet, rather than face criminal courts, these men still schmooze with government leaders and live like celebrities.

What great things our members could do if they had that money to invest in decent things, like schools, pensions, and homes. I have heard housekeepers say during their break that they dream of someday having enough money to buy a home.

The hotels in my city are making millions of dollars every year. If we had a strong union,

we could negotiate contracts that would allow them to buy their own home. But instead we are stuck with the Hanleys, the Maloneys, and their whole corrupt and expensive machinery. I am tired of bearing this burden and so are my fellow members.

Believe me, distinguished representatives, I have been forced to think long and hard since I decided to fight for a strong union. I believe in democracy, but democracy means law, and the Hanleys have gotten away with flaunting the law for 30 years. Sometimes I can't believe it when I think about it. After all the time and effort the federal government spent in investigating my union, little has changed. Ed Hanley is living off a huge pension and his son Tom is running the show through Terry Maloney. Let me tell you a story about our election.

After the elections results were announced, Terry Maloney and other union leaders had a suite at the Hyatt Hotel. We know this because members throughout the city keep us informed of what is going on.

This is what they told me. Tom Hanley was there and he made a short speech. He told Terry and the rest of the people that his family is grateful for their service in the election. It was just another sign that Terry Maloney is just a front for Tom Hanley. We believe that Terry Maloney is waiting for the right time to bring Hanley back to the union.

It's very strange to think that Tom Hanley may be plotting a return to the union when he should be facing criminal charges.

I wish you could see Maloney's behavior in the first meeting after the election. We tried to put a motion on the floor. Maloney was ridiculous, shouting us down, violating our rights and the rules of governing meeting procedure. The meeting was more like a collection of gangsters than a democratic union meeting. Sitting just behind Maloney was the president of the international, John Willhelm, smiling as if nothing was wrong. And yet everything was wrong. But Willhelm would say nothing about Maloney after the meeting.

My union is at a crossroads. Maloney and the Hanleys will try to keep things as they are and we will fight them at the meetings and at the worksites, and in the newsletter we have created.

Representatives, I want you to know that my fellow reformers and I will continue to fight for a union we can be proud of. I want you to know that I fully support anything that will help members know more about their rights, so people like the Hanleys and the Maloneys can no

longer live lives of wealth and ease, but must face the anger of the members whom they exploit.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at today's hearing.