



# This Is "Neutral"?

**Stop The Confirmation!** One of the back stories to the recent Vermont Labor Relations Board's (VLRB) ruling in favor of the Scott Administration's last best offer is the Board's last-minute\* seating of Karen O'Neill in a key "neutral" seat. O'Neill has yet to be confirmed by the Senate, but, oddly, Vermont law permits individuals to hear cases on the VLRB prior to being officially sworn in.

The VLRB defines neutral as individuals in high standing, not connected to any labor organization or management position and who can be reasonably considered to be able to serve as an impartial individual.

Now, here is a snapshot of Karen O'Neill's work history:

According to the resume supplied by the VLRB, O'Neill is a corporate attorney who served as General Counsel to Green Mountain Power. She most recently served in the same role for the Vermont Electric Power Company.

O'Neill has also served as in-house counsel to several other utility companies in Vermont and Texas, with responsibilities that included oversight of human resources issues. She has also been a shareholder in Gravel & Shea, a management law firm that advertises itself as follows:

**"In both the public and private sectors, we have successfully defeated union organizing drives."**

**"While we are available to answer all types of employment-related questions from our clients, our services generally relate to preventive labor and employment strategies, the defense of employment-related claims and dealing with union-organized workforces."**

The VLRB has stated that O'Neill could serve as a neutral because she is retired and has no current affiliation with management. Statute also asks whether she:

- Can be reasonably considered to be able to serve as an impartial individual"; and
- Whether the appointment can be said to "ensure a continuing balance on the Board of labor, management, and neutral backgrounds."

VSEA members, this is the neutral who cast the deciding vote against your union's very fair last best offer. Before the Senate confirms Ms. O'Neill, which it still has to do before adjourning, contact your Senators and ask them to oppose Karen O'Neill's forthcoming appointment to the VLRB as a "neutral."

**Find Your Vermont Senator(s) Here:**  
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/people/>

*\*VSEA is questioning how the Scott Administration maneuvered to get Ms. O'Neill substituted in at the last minute and will argue that the way it went down has poisoned any credibility she could ever have with state workers.*

