

## **John Stepp's role in Yale negotiations**

New Haven Register

During the news conference, held at Yale's Cross Campus, union leaders repeatedly cited recommendations for union-management peace made by John Stepp, a consultant Levin hired last year.

"Yale won't even talk about their own consultant's recommendations," Proto said. "In fact, President Levin has removed (Stepp) from the bargaining process."

The unions most often cite Stepp's first recommendation: "Some understanding as to how current organizing efforts will be conducted and how the union's long-term need to grow its business (should) be addressed."

The union leaders see this as an endorsement of their efforts to organize university graduate students and about 1,800 service workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital. University officials say Stepp made no such specific recommendation.

Reached for comment in Washington Tuesday, Stepp said, "Nothing in that recommendation is intended to suggest what the resolution should be, only that a resolution is critical. I'm not advocating any (specific) solution."

Stepp said the recommendation does not call for card count neutrality, which the unions favor. He said that method is just "one of the possibilities."

Under card count neutrality, management agrees to remain silent on unionization and if a majority of the workers sign union cards, the union is then recognized. University and hospital officials instead back National Labor Relations Board secret ballot elections.

Stepp declined comment on whether Levin is "ignoring" his recommendations. He said the university has not canceled his services. "On call" would be a good way to describe his situation, Stepp said.

Local 34 President Laura Smith said at the news conference, "We're still optimistic. But we're determined to make these changes happen - peacefully, if possible."

Asked whether rank and file members of Locals 34 and 35 will continue to go without the benefits of new contracts for the sake of graduate students and hospital workers, Smith said, "Our members expect real change on this campus. That's what they're willing to fight for."