When some labor disputes with businesses cannot be resolved, the AFL-CIO supports its affiliates by endorsing their boycotts. A boycott is an act of solidarity by voluntarily abstaining from the purchase or use of a product or service.

POLICY GUIDELINE FOR ENDORSEMENT OF AFFILIATES’ BOYCOTTS

The AFL-CIO Executive Council has developed policy guidelines that regulate how the federation endorses boycotts undertaken by its affiliates. To get AFL-CIO sanction, boycotts should be directed at primary employers.

THE GUIDELINES INCLUDE THESE PROVISIONS:

- All requests to the national AFL-CIO for endorsement must be made by a national or international union.
- Any affiliated union with a contract in force with the same primary employer will be contacted by the AFL-CIO to determine whether there is an objection to the federation’s endorsement.
- Affiliates will be asked to provide the AFL-CIO with background information on the dispute in a confidential information survey. Prior to endorsement of the boycott, the executive officers, or their designees, will meet with the national union’s officers, or their designees, to discuss the union’s strategic plan and timetable for the boycott, or other appropriate tactics, and to discuss the federation’s role.
- The national or international union initiating the boycott is primarily responsible for all boycott activities; the AFL-CIO will provide supplemental support.
- Boycotts will be carried on the AFL-CIO national boycott list for a period of one year; and the endorsement will expire automatically at the end of that time. National and international unions may request one-year extensions of the listings for actions where an organizing or bargaining campaign is actively in place.

(These guidelines were adopted by the AFL-CIO Executive Council in April 2011.)