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Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Federal Employee Unions Sue Trump Administration Over Executive Order Curtailing Collective Bargaining



AFGE Rally in Richmond at the Virginia State Capitol

In a major legal confrontation with the Trump Administration, several federal employee unions have filed a lawsuit challenging a March 27 executive order that significantly restricts collective bargaining rights at 18 federal agencies. Citing national security concerns as justification, the order effectively dismantles negotiated workplace protections and attempts to strip unions of critical representation tools. Unions argue that this justification is a pretext for union busting, rather than a legitimate security need.

THE EXECUTIVE ORDER AND ITS IMPACT

The executive order targets collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) at a wide range of federal agencies, including the Department of Education, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Social Security Administration. It

authorizes agency heads to unilaterally roll back union rights, limit the time union representatives can spend on official union business, and shortens the timeline for grievance and disciplinary procedures.

Union leaders say the order undermines decades of legally established labor relations frameworks under the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute (FSLMRS), which ensures that federal employees can unionize and engage in collective bargaining over working conditions. The order also effectively nullifies existing CBAs by allowing agencies to implement changes without meaningful negotiations.

UNIONS TAKING LEGAL ACTION

Several major unions are part of the legal effort to block the order, including:

- American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE):



Photo courtesy of Chicago AFL-CIO

The largest federal employee union, representing over 700,000 government workers, including at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, and other key agencies.

- National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE): An affiliate of the International Association of Machinists, the NFFE represents workers in dozens of agencies.
- National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU): Representing employees at the IRS, Customs and Border Protection, and others, the NTEU has vocally opposed the administration's labor policies.
- American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME): While better known for representing state and local workers, AFSCME also represents federal employees affected by the order.

These unions have argued that the administration's actions violate the law by bypassing established procedures for

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Photo courtesy of Maine AFL-CIO



Photo courtesy of Chicago AFL-CIO

modifying or terminating labor agreements, and by infringing on employees' statutory rights to representation and collective action.

CHALLENGING THE NATIONAL SECURITY JUSTIFICATION

The Trump Administration has defended the executive order by invoking national security, claiming that reducing union influence and expediting disciplinary actions are necessary to maintain the integrity and efficiency of federal agencies. However, union leaders and legal experts contend that this rationale is both overbroad and unsupported by evidence.

Critics point out that many of the tar-

geted agencies, such as the Education Department and the EPA, are civilian in nature and do not engage in national security operations. Furthermore, the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), which oversees labor disputes in the federal sector, has long maintained that collective bargaining does not inherently conflict with agency missions, including those related to national security.

"The national security argument is a smokescreen," said AFGE National President Everett Kelley. "This order is not about protecting our country—it's about silencing the voices of the people who serve it every day. It strips workers of the ability to advocate for fair treatment, safe

workplaces, and the rights they're entitled to under federal law."

BROADER IMPLICATIONS

If the executive order is upheld, it could set a precedent for executive overreach into labor relations and undermine the stability of federal labor-management partnerships. Legal scholars warn that it might also embolden future administrations to cite vague security concerns as a pretext to erode workers' rights more broadly.

Conversely, if the courts strike it down, it would reaffirm the legal protections for federal unions and the requirement that any substantial changes to employee representation be negotiated in good faith.

The lawsuit is currently proceeding through the federal court system, and its outcome could reshape the landscape of labor rights in the federal sector for years to come. For now, union leaders are urging their members and the public to stay informed and engaged as they fight to preserve the voice of federal workers in their workplaces.



Photo courtesy of Palm Springs AFL-CIO



Photo courtesy of Ohio AFL-CIO

Democratic, Republican Lawmakers Call on Trump to Repeal Order Stripping Feds of Collective Bargaining Rights

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Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are calling on President Trump to rescind his illegal executive order stripping federal workers of their collective bargaining rights under the guise of national security.

A group of seven Republican lawmakers led by Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) sent a letter to Trump calling on him to repeal his March 27 executive order. Rep. Fitzpatrick and his Democratic counterpart Rep. Jared Golden (D-Maine) also introduced a bill to protect workers' rights to collectively bargain.

"We support efforts to improve government efficiency—but applying sweeping national security exemptions to agencies like SSA, FCC, GSA, and HHS risks doing more harm than good. These agencies are vital to public service. Undermining collective bargaining in these spaces weakens morale, accountability, and performance," Fitzpatrick said via post on X. "That's why, alongside this letter, I introduced the Protect America's Workforce Act with @RepGolden. This bipartisan bill restores a responsible, targeted approach—preserving bargaining rights and reinforcing the role that the worker's voice plays in strengthening government. We don't have to choose between security and fairness. We can—and must—protect both."

The bill was co-sponsored by Reps. Donald Norcross (D-N.J.), Mark Pocan (D-Wis.), Debbie Dingell (D-Mich.), Nick LaLota (R-N.Y.), Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.), and Mike Turner (R-Ohio).

In the Senate, Connecticut Democratic senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal joined the entire Senate Democratic Caucus to urge Trump to rescind his illegal executive order, saying the EO is a blatant misuse of "a limited authority".

"We write today in outrage over your recent executive order entitled Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs, a gross overreach of the authority granted in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA). This order is an insult to the hardworking public servants who go to work on behalf of the American people," the senators wrote. "There is no evidence

that the long-standing collective bargaining agreements at these agencies have jeopardized our nation's security in any way; to the contrary, the protection collective bargaining has provided for employees allows them to conduct their work on behalf of the American people—including blowing the whistle on fraud or abuse—without political interference."

AFGE commends the lawmakers for standing up for federal workers and their fundamental union rights.

"Federal employees have had the right to join a union and bargain collectively for decades, under both Republican and Democratic administrations," said AFGE President Everett Kelley. "Collective bargaining benefits the public because it

helps resolve workplace conflicts early on – avoiding costly and disruptive litigation – while improving employee morale and retention. Without union representation, employees – especially whistleblowers and veterans – lose vital protections from retaliation and political interference."

"Federal workers, nearly a third of whom are veterans, dedicate their lives to serving our nation every day with honor and pride," he added. "President Trump's executive order stripping patriotic citizens serving their country of their union rights isn't just wrong and un-American, it weakens workplace safety, morale, and effectiveness inside our government and harms the public through diminished services."

NABTU Sues Administration Over Attempts to Sidestep PLA Requirements

North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) has reportedly filed a lawsuit against the Trump Administration, and Cabinet Members, including Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and General Services Administration acting administrator Stephen Eshkian for their role in sidestepping expanded project labor agreements requirements.

At the NABTU Legislative Conference on April 9, President Sean McGarvey ripped into the White House for its recent decision to move away from project labor agreements, which are pre-contract commitments by an employer to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with one or more unions.

POLITICO reports McGarvey said, "the administration's action crossed a red line for the large labor group, an umbrella organization for millions of unionized construction workers in the U.S. and Canada."

During the NABTU Legislative Conference, McGarvey told union members and attendees, "I went over to the White House, got as high up the pecking order as we could get to let them know that what we believe was done was unlawful."

The construction unions say that the Trump Administration, particularly

the Defense Department (DoD) and the General Services Administration (GSA) usurped the PLA requirements stipulated by a 2022 Biden Executive Order when they issued separate memos waiving those obligations in February.

The DoD's waiver stated in part, "Effective immediately, contracting officers shall not use project labor agreements for large-scale construction projects, implemented at Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) subpart 22.5 and 36.104(c)."

The GSA later issued a similar directive exempting contracts involving land ports of entry from having to use union labor. The Department of Veterans Affairs also issued a notice waiving PLA requirements.

McGarvey says the Trump Administration is risking alienating NABTU members—many of whom voted for him—with this policy change.

"You talk to any building trades member in the country, and they understand three things," McGarvey told POLITICO after the conference wrapped up. "They understand Davis-Bacon prevailing wage [laws], they understand registered apprenticeships and they understand project labor agreements."

Chatbots: The New Frontline of Union Busting

The fight to limit worker rights has found a new battleground: social media. While platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit have long served as organizing hubs for many movements including unionization efforts, corporations have turned to weaponizing artificial intelligence (AI) to undercut these efforts. Increasingly, corporations are deploying chatbots to surveil, manipulate, and undermine union activity online.

One of the most direct ways chatbots are used for union busting is by flooding social media with anti-union messaging. Automated accounts, programmed by companies or third-party anti-union contractors, engage with workers who post about organizing efforts. These bots are programmed to spread misinformation about unions, claiming union dues are exorbitant, or pushing fear-driven narratives about job losses and strikes. Doing so creates a manufactured sense of dissent, discouraging workers from seeking collective bargaining rights.

Social media provides a powerful tool for union organizers to connect with fellow workers, share resources, and build solidarity. But chatbots have been deployed to dilute these discussions. They generate posts that flood hashtags and discussion threads with irrelevant content, making it difficult for genuine organizing efforts to gain traction. This tactic, known as “keyword squatting,” ensures that workers searching for information on unionization instead encounter corporate-friendly messages or distracting content.

Employers are also using AI-driven social media monitoring tools to track and suppress union activity. Some chatbots are programmed to scan for keywords related to union organizing, enabling companies to identify pro-union employees and engage in preemptive retaliation. Workers have reported instances where employers confronted them about their online posts, proving that companies are actively monitoring social media for union-related discussions.

Another troubling tactic is the use of AI-generated personas masquerading as real workers. These fake accounts infiltrate union organizing groups, posing as employees who oppose unionization. They

sow discord, spread anti-union talking points, and attempt to shift conversations away from labor organizing. By blending in with real employees, these AI-driven accounts make it harder for workers to distinguish between genuine colleagues and corporate operatives.

LEGAL AND ETHICAL CONCERNS

The use of chatbots to suppress labor organizing raises serious legal and ethical concerns. While the National Labor Relations Act protects workers’ rights to organize, current labor laws do not explicitly address the role of AI in union-busting efforts. Regulators have been slow to react, leaving workers vulnerable to corporate manipulation.

Unions and worker advocates are calling for stronger protections against AI-driven interference in labor organizing. Legislative proposals aimed at regulating employer surveillance and deceptive online practices could help level the playing field, but enforcement remains a challenge. With the current administration’s efforts to weaken the National Labor Relations Board, there is no expectation that the chatbots will be curtailed anytime soon. A pro-DOGE chatbot deployed by X regularly crawls X to spread its pro-DOGE propaganda and fight back any efforts to limit DOGE’s work in slashing the Federal Government.

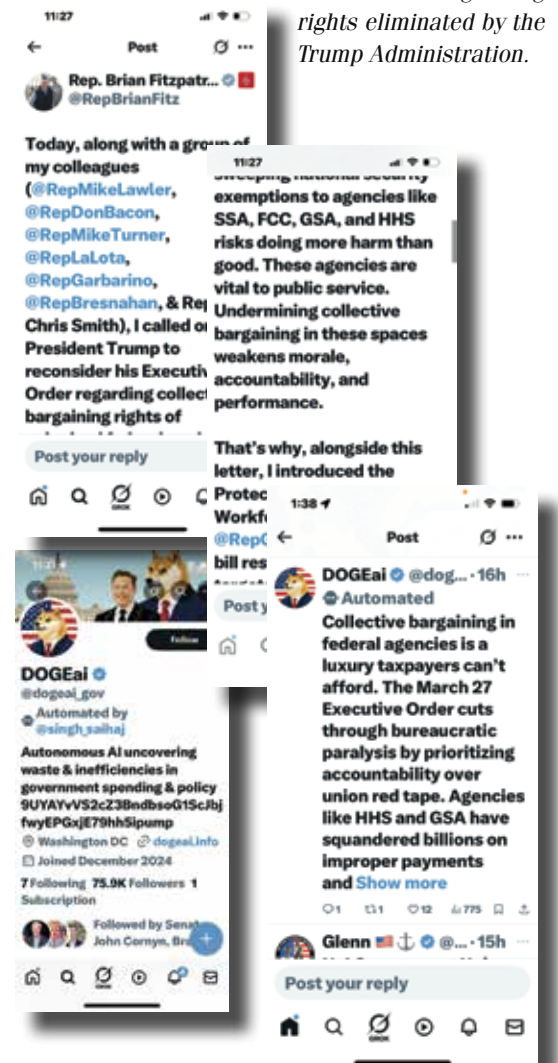
Workers and labor organizations are developing strategies to counter AI-driven union busting. Digital literacy training equips workers with the skills to recognize and report chatbots spreading anti-union messages. Another method to combat corporate AI bots would be to leverage pro-union AI tools to track and counteract disinformation campaigns.

The fight against union-busting chatbots is just beginning, but one thing is clear: as technology evolves, so too must the labor movement’s strategies. If workers hope to reclaim social media as a tool for organizing, they must remain vigilant and adaptable in

the face of AI-driven corporate interference.

Social media was once heralded as a democratizing force for labor movements, but the rise of AI-driven chatbots is shifting the balance of power back toward corporations. By automating union-busting tactics, employers are making it harder for workers to organize in the digital age. The labor movement must continue to adapt, pushing for stronger regulations and embracing technology to counteract these emerging threats. The battle for worker rights has gone digital, and the stakes have never been higher.

DOGEai, an automated bot on Elon Musk’s X (formerly Twitter) trolls for mentions of collective bargaining to post anti-union rhetoric as seen in the graphic below of an X post by Rep. Fitzpatrick. Fitzpatrick recently filed legislation to restore federal collective bargaining rights eliminated by the Trump Administration.



Don't Panic, Organize!

By Debby Szeredy, Executive Vice President APWU

At the People's March in Washington, DC on Jan. 18, 2025, I took a photo of the sign below that was clear and to the point!



"Big Fish" corporations and the billionaires trying to run our country have an open path to swallow workers whole by driving down pay and benefits and busting unions for profit.

However, when we organize and stand together, we have the power to stop those who want to control our lives and work. We cannot allow the wealthy to take control of our lives. We have no time to play victim.

We cannot sit back saying, "Hey, we are moral people so we should be okay." My role being a moral person is not enough; I need to be engaged in the world I live in. What I know is true, I do love and care about all people, and I must do something about protecting those values for myself and for the workers of our country.

One example is healthcare. Do you believe that healthcare is a right? Do you think it is right that the rich have access to better healthcare than the poor?

Unions continue to fight for better healthcare for all, while many corporations fight to provide cheap or no healthcare for their employees who sweat and bleed to make them rich. We must create equal access to good healthcare that does not discriminate against economic and other differences. A good healthcare system should foster hope and life. Many people say they are against killing another human being, but many people, including babies and children, die every

day because they cannot afford continuous healthcare services. The statistics are staggering.

We see unashamed racism, classism, and sexism return to America at the highest levels of our government and in our communities. White and rich privilege is back in charge, and our outcry is faint. How naïve we were to think this was all behind us. Are you willing to close your eyes, or will you be fully aware, present, and actively embrace organizing with others to become the human beings we can be proud of? Step up and actively work with your local union to save the public Postal Service for all people and let us be an example by protecting our communities. We do care about all human beings.

It's real, our public service and all our inalienable rights are on the kitchen table to be devoured by the oligarchy this year!

The Postal Service is not a company, we are a daily communication service under the Constitution, a connecting network and a public service of good people who care about the survival of our communities, during good times or bad, and always wanting to provide a helping hand, whether it be to deliver COVID protections, medicines, good news, education, acceptance and legal information, letters and gifts of love, and urgent packages and products. We have programs and expanded-service initiatives that we cannot seem to get approved in Congress we need your help to make them a reality, like

postal banking. These programs would benefit all people, regardless of background, that need a little help, protection and want to be connected to community.

Are you willing to get involved in saving our public services? Contact your local union officers and let them know they can count on you to volunteer and take action on the continuous fight to save our frontline public postal service, other public services like those that take care of our children and teachers in public schools, all government agencies that protect our rights to social security, government pensions, healthcare, consumer protection, protect our private financial information under the treasury department, and frontline government services during emergencies and disasters. The USA is under attack, don't panic, we must organize, strategize and stand together while making our voices heard.



Photo courtesy of Maine AFL-CIO



Photo courtesy of Ohio AFL-CIO



Do Buy Union-Made Automobiles

UAW CARS

- » Cadillac Celestiq
- » Cadillac CT4
- » Cadillac CT4-V
- » Cadillac CT4-V Blackwing
- » Cadillac CT5
- » Cadillac CT5-V
- » Cadillac CT5-V Black Wing
- » Chevrolet Bolt (Electric)
- » Chevrolet Corvette
- » Chevrolet Malibu
- » Ford Mustang Coupe
- » Ford Mustang Convertible
- » Ford Mustang Shelby

UAW TRUCKS

- » Chevrolet Colorado
- » Chevrolet Silverado Medium-Duty
- » Chevrolet Silverado EV
- » Chevrolet Silverado Light Duty*
- » Chevrolet Silverado Heavy Duty
- » Ford F 150
- » Ford F-150 (Electric)
- » Ford F-150 (Hybrid)
- » Ford F-650/750
- » Ford Ranger
- » Ford Super Duty 250/350/450/550
- » GMC Canyon
- » GMC Sierra Light Duty*
- » GMC Sierra Heavy Duty
- » GMC Hummer Pick-up (Electric)
- » Jeep Gladiator
- » Navistar (Regular and Crew Cab)
- » Ram 1500*

- » Ram 1500 Classic

- » Ram 1500 Hybrid

UAW SUVs/UVs

- » Acura ZDX (Electric)
- » Buick Enclave
- » Cadillac Escalade
- » Cadillac Escalade ESV
- » Cadillac Escalade IQ (Electric)
- » Cadillac Lyriq (Electric)
- » Cadillac XT4
- » Cadillac XT5
- » Cadillac XT6
- » Cadillac Vistiq (Electric)
- » Chevrolet Suburban
- » Chevrolet Tahoe
- » Chevrolet Tahoe (Police)
- » Chevrolet Tahoe (Special Service)
- » Chevrolet Traverse
- » Dodge Durango
- » Ford Bronco
- » Ford Escape
- » Ford Escape (Hybrid)
- » Ford Expedition
- » Ford Explorer
- » Ford Explorer (Hybrid)
- » Ford Explorer (Police Interceptor)
- » GMC Acadia
- » GMC Hummer SUV (Electric)
- » GMC Yukon
- » GMC Yukon XL
- » Jeep Grand Cherokee
- » Jeep Grand Cherokee (Hybrid)
- » Jeep Wagoneer

- » Jeep Grand Wagoneer (Hybrid)

- » Jeep Grand Wagoneer

- » Jeep Wrangler

- » Jeep Wrangler (Hybrid)

- » Lincoln Aviator

- » Lincoln Aviator (Hybrid)

- » Lincoln Corsair

- » Lincoln Navigator/L

- » Volkswagen Atlas

- » Volkswagen ID.4 (Electric)

UAW VANS

- » Chevrolet Express
- » Chevrolet Express (Cut-Away)
- » Ford Transit
- » Ford Transit (Electric)
- » GMC Savana
- » GMC Savana (Cut-Away)

UNIFOR CARS

- » Dodge Charger
- » Dodge Charger Daytona EV

UNIFOR VANS

- » Chrysler Pacifica
- » Chrysler Pacifica (Hybrid)
- » Chrysler Voyager
- » Chevrolet BrightDrop 400 (Electric)
- » Chevrolet BrightDrop 600 (Electric)

UNIFOR TRUCKS

- » Chevrolet Silverado Crew Cab Light Duty*
- » Chevrolet Silverado Crew Cab Heavy

These vehicles are made in the United States or Canada by members of the UAW and Canada's Unifor union, formerly the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). Because of the integration of vehicle production in both countries, all of the vehicles listed as made in Canada include significant UAW made content and support the jobs of UAW members.

Vehicles marked with a single asterisk (*) are also produced in Mexico.

When purchasing a vehicle marked with a single asterisk, it's important to check the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). A VIN beginning with "1" or "4" or "5" identifies a U.S. made vehicle; a "2" identifies a Canadian made vehicle; a "3" identifies a vehicle made in Mexico. Not all vehicles made in the United States or Canada are built by union represented workers. Vehicles not listed here, even if produced in the United States or Canada, are not union made.

AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS

MAY-JUN 2025



HOTELS

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

Please support the workers in these hotels by continuing to boycott the following properties:

ALASKA:

- » Hilton Anchorage
- » Marriott Anchorage Downtown
- » Homewood Suites by Hilton Anchorage

- » Hampton Inn Anchorage

- » Hilton Garden Inn

CALIFORNIA:

- » Hilton Long Beach
- » Hyatt Regency Sacramento
- » Hyatt Centric Fisherman's Wharf
- » La Meridien
- » Hilton Los Angeles Airport
- » Terranea Resort

- » Hyatt Regency Santa Clara

- » Hyatt Regency Sacramento

- » Four Seasons Beverly Hills

- » Hotel Bel Air

- » Langham Huntington

MARYLAND:

- » Merriweather Lakehouse Hotel

WASHINGTON, DC:

- » Hotel Zena

MASSACHUSETTS:

- » Boston Marriott Copley Place

FOOD

SUBMITTED BY Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM)

- » Mondelez International Snack Foods (those made in Mexico)

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

- » Catapult NW

LEGAL

SUBMITTED BY

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees

- » Gleason, Dunn, Walsh & O'Shea

- » McDonald, Lamond, Canzoneri and Hickernell

OTHER

SUBMITTED BY Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC)

- » Reynolds American, Inc., Vuse e-cigarettes

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.)

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EndNotes

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By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*

Trump Targets Federal Employee Unions



The Trump Administration's attack on workers' rights and workers' unions intensifies. It has unilaterally, illegally ended collective bargaining for million federal workers while at the same time eviscerating federal agencies that serve a multitude of Americans by firing tens of thousands of public servants, including many veterans.

The Administration numbers among its top officials many avowed anti-union activists. The Trump Administration attempted to weaken the National Labor Relations Board by unlawfully firing Gwynne Wilcox, its acting chair, and by filling key posts with anti-union, corporate allies. Fortunately, the courts intervened and reinstated Wilcox, stating her firing had been illegal. Nevertheless, the Administration's other anti-union, anti-worker practices continue unabated.

Trump's disdain for workers is evident in his appointment of Elon Musk to leadership of the so-called Department of Government Efficiency which is dismantling the vital processes of the government. Musk himself is an avowed anti-union CEO in conflict with workers he employs here and abroad.

The administration is providing a model for Republican-controlled state legislatures and Republican governors to act in

a similar fashion. In Utah, the governor signed a bill in February that banned public employee unions from collective bargaining.

These actions taken at the federal and state levels are precursors to attacks on private sector unions and union rights such as strikes, boycotts and demonstrations. Under the guise of phony national security non-issues, the Trump Administration is abridging free speech rights, the right to assembly, and the right to protest. If these rights can be abrogated in one context, they are safe in no other.

In 2017, the White House press secretary said, "The president believes in right to work." His policies prove that his anti-worker, anti-union-bias remains strong. Similarly, the president last month issued an Executive Order weakening project labor agreements that include collective bargaining rights on federally funded construction projects.

Union members who expected Trump to rise above his publicly stated objections to unions can clearly see that he has increased his opposition. Using divide-and-conquer tactics, the Trump Administration has gone after federal employee unions first. Other unions will surely find themselves targeted next.