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Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

The Power of the Union Label: Why Buying Union-Made Matters

Every day, union members make choices that shape their communities, their industries, and the future of work in America. One of the most powerful—and often overlooked—choices is what we buy. From groceries and clothing to cars, appliances, entertainment, and professional services, our purchasing decisions send a message about the kind of economy we want to build.

More than a century ago, Florence Kelley, a leader of the National Consumers League, summed up this idea with words that still ring true today:

"To live means to buy, to buy means to have power, to have power means to have responsibility."

For union members, that responsibility includes standing up for good jobs, fair wages, safe workplaces, and strong communities—values embodied in union-made products and union-provided services.

BUYING UNION IS AN INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITIES

When union members buy union-made, they aren't just purchasing a product—they are circulating dollars back into local and regional economies. Union jobs are good jobs. They pay family-sustaining wages, offer benefits, support retirement security, and uphold strong safety standards. Those wages, in turn, are spent in local stores, restaurants, and service businesses, supporting even more jobs throughout the community.

The ripple effect is real: one union paycheck helps sustain small businesses, public services, and local tax bases that fund schools, infrastructure, and emergency services. Choosing union-made strengthens this economic chain, reinforcing stability where we live and work.

PROTECTING JOBS AND RAISING STANDARDS ACROSS INDUSTRIES

Every time we choose a union-made product or a union service contractor, we help protect existing jobs and create demand for new ones. But the impact goes even further. Union standards raise the bar across industries—pushing wages up, improving safety, and strengthening benefits even for non-union workers.

Buying union also helps protect American manufacturing, construction, transportation, energy, entertainment, food production, and public services from a race to the bottom. In a global economy often driven by outsourcing and labor exploitation, union purchasing keeps jobs rooted here at home under fair labor standards.

CONSUMER POWER IS WORKER POWER

Union workers understand better than anyone that corporations and policymakers track where money flows. When workers act together as informed consumers, that collective power becomes a formidable force. It rewards employers who do the right thing and sends a clear message to those who don't.

Florence Kelley's words remind us that buying is never neutral—it's an act of responsibility. Every union label is a statement that workers deserve dignity, voice, and fairness. It's a way to extend collective bargaining beyond the jobsite and into the marketplace.

SUPPORTING UNION SERVICES STRENGTHENS UNION COMMUNITIES

Union power doesn't just come from factory floors or job sites. It also flows through the service economy—union electricians, plumbers, hotel workers, gro-



cery workers, nurses, stagehands, public employees, construction crews, and countless others who keep our communities running every day.

Choosing union contractors, union hotels, union caterers, union entertainment, and union retailers directly supports working families who share our values and our struggles. It helps sustain strong labor standards in every corner of the economy.

A DAILY ACT OF SOLIDARITY

Union solidarity doesn't stop when the workday ends. It continues every time we shop, dine, travel, and hire services. Choosing union-made is one of the most practical, powerful, and personal ways to live our values as union members.

As Florence Kelley reminds us, buying is power—and power carries responsibility. By intentionally seeking out and supporting union products and union services, we strengthen our families, our communities, our industries, and the entire labor movement.

Buy union. It's not just a label—it's a commitment to working people and to the future we're building together.

Trump Administration Changes Put Women's Degrees and Careers at Risk

A DIRECT HIT TO THE CARE ECONOMY

The Trump Administration's new student-loan rules strike at the heart of America's care economy, reclassifying the advanced degrees held by nurses, educators, speech-language pathologists, social workers, physician assistants, and other predominantly female professionals as something less than "professional." Under these changes, only a narrow set of degrees—law, medicine, pharmacy, veterinary science, and theology—will qualify for the highest levels of federal graduate-loan support.

Everyone else, including workers in fields that require master's degrees, clinical placements, and licensure, is pushed into a lower tier with sharply reduced loan access and the elimination of Grad PLUS loans. For nurses, teachers, therapists, and social workers—jobs overwhelmingly filled by women, especially women of color—this creates an immediate and punishing barrier to pursuing the education their careers demand.

CLOSING THE DOOR ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR WOMEN

Economically, these changes strike at one of the few reliable paths to financial stability for women. Advanced degrees in nursing, education, social work, and allied health are among the clearest routes for women—particularly women of color—to secure middle-class wages, retirement benefits, and long-term career mobility.

When federal loan access is cut off, the burden falls hardest on women who cannot tap generational wealth or private credit to finance their degrees. By narrowing the educational pipeline, the administration is effectively narrowing lifetime earnings, deepening gender and racial wage gaps, and constricting economic growth in communities that rely on these professions as anchor employment.

AN UNAFFORDABLE BARRIER TO ENTRY

The impact is stark. Many advanced nursing, teaching, social work, and allied-health programs cost well over \$100,000. Without access to full federal loans, students—especially first-generation col-

lege students and those from low-wealth families—will be forced toward expensive private loans or out of school entirely.

Because these professions are heavily represented in public hospitals, schools, and community-based agencies, the rule also threatens the diversity and stability of the nation's caregiving workforce. Women of color, who already face greater financial barriers and are more likely to serve in high-need communities, will be hit hardest.

WORSENING A GROWING WORKFORCE CRISIS

This policy couldn't come at a worse time. The United States is already facing severe shortages of nurses, mental-health providers, special-education teachers, and speech-language pathologists. Restricting access to the degrees needed to enter these fields will only deepen those shortages and diminish access to care and services in underserved communities.

UNIONS PUSH BACK—AND DEFINE WHAT A PROFESSION IS

Unions and professional organizations are fighting back. National nurses' groups, education unions, and allied-health associations are pressing Congress and the Department of Education to reverse the reclassification and reinstate full federal loan eligibility for these advanced degrees. They are mobilizing member stories—especially from women of color—to show the real-world consequences of shutting working people out of graduate programs.

This moment demands clarity: nursing is a profession. Teaching is a profession. Speech pathology, social work, and allied health are professions. They require rigorous education, advanced clinical training, and skills the country depends on every single day.

By stripping these careers of their "professional" status, the Trump Administration is not just reshaping a loan program—it is devaluing the work of millions of women and narrowing the path for the next generation. Unions are committed to stopping that from happening, and they are calling on workers and community allies alike to defend the dignity and professional standing of America's care workforce.

What Local Unions Can Do Right Now to Push Back

Local unions have an essential role in fighting the Trump Administration's reclassification of advanced degrees and the student-loan restrictions that come with it. While national unions mount federal lobbying and legal challenges, locals can drive grassroots pressure, educate members, and protect workers on the ground.

Educate Members Quickly and Clearly

- Host a brief webinar or union meeting explaining how the rule affects your members. Make sure they understand that these changes could limit their access to graduate programs, reduce future earnings, and worsen workforce shortages.

Collect and Share Member Stories

- Personal stories—especially from women and women of color—carry enormous weight. Ask members how these loan restrictions would affect their ability to advance their careers, and share them with your national union, state federation, and elected officials.

Mobilize Political Pressure

- Encourage members to contact their Representatives and Senators.

Strengthen Collective Bargaining Demands

- At the bargaining table, push for employer-funded tuition reimbursement, paid professional-development time, and educational stipends.

Build Coalitions in Your Community

- Partner with local organizations to build broad alliances that demonstrate this fight is about workforce stability, community health, and economic fairness—not just loan policy.

Keep the Issue Visible

- Use your local's website, social media pages, newsletters, and bulletin boards to keep members informed and energized. The more attention these changes get, the harder they are to quietly impose.

Local unions are on the front lines of this fight. By organizing, speaking out, and supporting members directly, they can help ensure that caregiving professions remain accessible, respected, and truly professional.

Fair Trade Isn't the Same as Union Made — Workers Pay the Price for the Confusion

In recent years, ethical consumerism has gone mainstream. Shoppers are encouraged to look for labels like “fair trade,” “ethically sourced,” and “responsibly made” as a way to vote with their dollars. While these labels often reflect good intentions, there’s a critical misunderstanding baked into today’s ethical marketplace:

Fair trade and ethical consumerism are not the same thing as buying union-made—and they do not provide workers with the same power, protections, or voice on the job.

Conflating the two weakens labor standards, obscures who truly holds power in the workplace, and ultimately undermines the core principle of worker democracy.

WHAT FAIR TRADE AND ETHICAL CONSUMERISM ACTUALLY MEAN

“Fair trade” generally refers to voluntary certification systems that focus on minimum pricing, limited labor standards, and development projects—primarily in global supply chains. The most widely recognized certifier in the U.S. is Fair Trade USA, which works with companies to apply ethical sourcing standards to specific products.

Ethical consumerism more broadly is a market-driven approach: companies create codes of conduct, audit suppliers, and issue public reports on labor practices, environmental impact, and social responsibility.

These models typically emphasize:

- Wage floors
- Prohibitions on child labor
- Basic health and safety standards
- Environmental protections

All of that is positive—but none of it guarantees workers actual power over their working conditions.

WHAT “UNION-MADE” ACTUALLY MEANS

A union-made product comes from a workplace where workers have exercised their legal right to organize, bargain collectively, and enforce a contract. That contract is not voluntary or symbolic—it is legally binding.

Union status means:

- Workers negotiate wages, benefits, scheduling, and safety
- Workers can file grievances and enforce standards
- Workers can strike, organize collectively, and vote on their contract
- Labor standards can’t be quietly rolled back in a boardroom

In the U.S., union recognition and enforcement flow through federal labor law and institutions like the National Labor Relations Board and labor unions.

That legal power is the defining difference.

Fair trade audits are typically infrequent, pre-scheduled, and dependent on the continued cooperation of brands. Workers often cannot safely report violations without risking retaliation. If violations occur, consequences usually fall on paper—not at the bargaining table.

Union contracts, by contrast, give workers real leverage, backed by law and collective action.

WHY ETHICAL LABELS CAN UNDERCUT UNION ORGANIZING

There is a growing concern within labor that corporate “ethics branding” is being used as a substitute for worker organizing, not a path toward it.

Some corporations actively promote fair trade or ethical certifications while opposing unions in their own facilities, arguing that third-party audits make unions “unnecessary.”

Ethics becomes something companies grant rather than something workers win.

SUPPLY CHAINS VS. SHOP FLOORS

Fair trade emerged largely to address extreme exploitation in global agriculture and manufacturing—especially in countries with weak labor enforcement. That mission matters. But it does not address the fundamental power imbalance inside most workplaces because:

- Workers do not control production decisions
- Workers do not control pricing
- Workers do not control safety enforcement
- Workers do not negotiate directly with the employer

In a union shop, workers do all of that.

WHY “UNION-MADE” STILL MATTERS FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

Union-made products don’t just support better wages; they help sustain:

- Employer-funded health care
- Defined benefit pensions
- Paid family leave
- Apprenticeship and training pipelines
- Strong local tax bases
- Safer workplaces

Entire middle-class communities are built on union density—especially in manufacturing, construction, transportation, and public service sectors.

Fair trade labels do not build that kind of economic stability.

ETHICAL CONSUMERISM WITHOUT WORKER DEMOCRACY IS INCOMPLETE

Ethical consumerism asks shoppers to trust corporations to do the right thing. Union-made manufacturing requires employers to negotiate with workers as equals.

That difference matters—because history shows that without organized worker power wages stagnate, safety standards erode, scheduling becomes unstable, surveillance increases, and job security disappears.

No certification label can replace a worker with a legally protected voice.

The Federal Minimum Wage Hasn't Kept Up with Inflation *Companies are Using It to Their Advantage*

The United States is heading into 2026 with a federal minimum wage frozen at \$7.25 an hour since July 2009—a wage so outdated that it no longer serves as a baseline for dignified work. Over the past 17 years, the costs of housing, food, transportation, and health care have surged, while the wage floor has remained unchanged. Workers today are effectively paid less in real purchasing power than minimum-wage workers in the 1960s.

If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, it would be well over \$12 an hour today. If it had tracked the growth of worker productivity—the value employees generate for employers—it would now be in the range of \$22–\$25 an hour. That number is not a coincidence: it is the range many economists say would be necessary in 2026 for a single adult to meet basic needs without public assistance.

And that is where the country finds itself. Corporations that long resisted raising wages are finally advertising “competitive” starting pay of around \$20–\$23 an hour, not because they are suddenly committed to lifting workers out of poverty, but because that is simply what the minimum wage should be in 2026 if it had grown at even a modest, historically normal rate.

THE AMAZON EXAMPLE — POVERTY WAGES MARKETED AS GENEROSITY

Amazon—one of the largest employers in the United States—has recently highlighted that its average starting wage now exceeds \$23 an hour. At first glance, this sounds like progress. But a closer look reveals a more troubling truth: Amazon isn’t leading; it is catching up to the bare minimum that the federal government should have set years ago.

With rent up dramatically over the past decade, groceries rising nearly 25 percent since 2020, and transportation, utilities, and childcare costs climbing steadily, a \$23 wage does not stretch as far as employers claim. A full-time worker earning \$23 an hour brings home about \$47,800 a year before taxes—well below what most economic models define as a “living wage” for a family in nearly every

region of the country. For many households, that income still qualifies them for public assistance.

Corporations framing \$23 an hour as a transformative, family-supporting wage is at best misleading. In reality, they are paying 2026 workers what the minimum wage should already be, while continuing to oppose federal wage standards that would ensure all workers—not just those employed by massive multinationals—earn a fair baseline income.

SEVENTEEN YEARS WITHOUT AN UPDATE IS A POLICY CHOICE

America’s wage floor did not stagnate by accident. Congressional inaction—driven largely by lobbying from the same corporations now boasting about their pay—has held the minimum wage flat while inflation has steadily eroded its value. The result is a growing gap between what workers earn and the actual cost of living.

Meanwhile, 30 states and dozens of cities have raised their own minimum wages to reflect economic reality. Their economies have not collapsed. Instead, workers spend more locally, businesses experience lower turnover, and communities benefit from greater financial stability. The federal government remains the outlier.

WORKERS ARE PRODUCING MORE AND RECEIVING LESS

Today’s workers are more productive, more technologically skilled, and more efficient than ever before. But the economic gains generated by their labor have increasingly flowed upward, not back to the people who create the value. The decoupling of productivity and pay—the defining economic story of the last 40 years—is one reason the “\$23 average wage” touted by Amazon and others is not a sign of generosity but a sign of systemic failure.

If productivity had continued to influence minimum-

wage policy, the wage floor would be nearly identical to what Amazon is paying today. The company is not exceeding expectations; it is benefiting from a broken policy structure that lets private employers define what ‘fair pay’ means, even when that pay still leaves families struggling.

RAISING THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE IS LONG OVERDUE

American workers should not depend on corporate branding campaigns to secure basic economic dignity. Raising the federal minimum wage—indexed to inflation and paired with strong enforcement—is the most effective way to ensure that all working people share in the prosperity they help create.

Until Congress acts, employers will continue to describe wages that barely keep families afloat as if they are a gift. And working people will continue to subsidize corporate profits through public assistance, personal debt, and impossible choices between rent, medicine, and groceries.

Seventeen years of inaction is enough. A federal minimum wage that keeps pace with both inflation and productivity isn’t just an economic necessity—it’s a moral one.

THE FEDERAL MINIMUM WAGE VS. WHAT WORKERS SHOULD EARN IN 2026



Why Unions Are Surging in Popularity Despite a System Rigged Against Workers

For the first time in generations, unions are enjoying a powerful resurgence—across workplaces, industries, and demographics. From service workers to high-tech professionals, more Americans are turning to unions to win the stability and respect they've been denied for far too long. But the rising popularity comes with a critical truth: union membership isn't growing nearly as fast as public support, and it's not because workers don't want unions. It's because the rules of the game are rigged against them.

WORKERS WANT UNIONS. THE LAW MAKES IT HARD TO FORM ONE.

Poll after poll shows overwhelming support for unions, especially among young people and workers in emerging industries. Yet union membership remains far lower than it would be if workers could freely choose representation. Why? Because the United States—unlike most industrialized nations—has labor laws that actively stifle organizing.

Current federal laws allow employers to delay elections, intimidate workers, hold mandatory anti-union meetings, fire organizers with little consequence, and drag out bargaining for years. Even when workers win their union election, they often struggle to obtain a first contract because employers face minimal penalties for stalling or refusing to bargain.

The result is a system where the legal right to form a union exists on paper—but in practice, workers face a gauntlet designed to wear them down.

A BROKEN ECONOMY HAS WORKERS DEMANDING A VOICE

Workers today are navigating soaring costs, stagnant wages, and record corporate profits. Housing, groceries, health care, and childcare are all more expensive than ever—yet paychecks have barely budged. People see executives earning hundreds of times more than front-line workers, even as those workers struggle just to keep up.

Unions offer the surest path to balance. Collective bargaining delivers higher pay,

better benefits, safer workplaces, and real career stability. But as long as labor laws tilt toward employers, too many workers are blocked from accessing these protections.

A NEW GENERATION IS READY TO ORGANIZE—BUT MEETING OLD BARRIERS

Young workers are driving today's labor wave, bringing energy and innovation to new organizing campaigns. They're unionizing coffee shops, universities, logistics hubs, nonprofits, media outlets, and tech companies.

But even the most energized campaigns run into the same structural roadblocks: union-busting consultants, illegal retaliation, and endless legal delays. These tactics aren't accidental—they've become a business model for corporations taking advantage of weak laws and underfunded enforcement.

What's remarkable is that despite formidable obstacles, young workers are pushing ahead anyway. Their determination underscores just how strong the demand for unions really is.

HIGH-PROFILE WINS HAVE SHIFTED PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Workers are paying attention to a string of major labor victories—autoworkers securing historic raises and COLA protections, nurses and educators winning staffing guarantees, entertainment workers fighting for AI protections, and federal employees battling attempts to restrict collective bargaining rights.

These wins show that when workers overcome the legal hurdles to unionizing, they make transformative gains. Every victory exposes the disconnect between the popularity of unions and the difficulty of forming one under today's rules.

POLITICAL GRIDLOCK LEAVES WORKERS TO FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES

Decades of congressional inaction have allowed labor laws to decay while corporations gain more power. Efforts to modern-

America doesn't suffer from a lack of worker interest in unions—it suffers from a lack of worker freedom to form them.

ize labor rights—like the PRO Act—have stalled, leaving workers to navigate a system created for a very different economy.

As lawmakers fail to keep up, unions fill the gap. Through collective bargaining, workers can win safety standards, wage fairness, job security, and benefits that politicians have repeatedly failed to deliver.

DESPITE THE OBSTACLES, MOMENTUM IS ONLY GROWING

The growing popularity of unions is not a trend—it's a demand for fundamental fairness. Workers know that unions rebuild the middle class, reduce inequality, lift wages, and give people real control over their working lives. And they know that membership numbers remain low not because unions are unwanted, but because powerful interests have spent decades weakening the laws that protect workers' rights.

That gap between support and membership tells the real story: America doesn't suffer from a lack of worker interest in unions—it suffers from a lack of worker freedom to form them.

And still, workers are organizing. They are refusing to accept a broken status quo. They are pushing back against corporate power and weak laws alike. As more Americans recognize the stakes—and see what unions deliver—this momentum will continue to grow.



Valentine's Day

Be sure to look for these union-made products for your sweetheart this Valentines Day.

Are you looking for gifts for Valentine's Day? This Feb. 14, give your valentine some union-made sweets, toast your love with champagne that carries a union label or show your sweetheart how much you care with a union-made flower bouquet.

SWEETS

- » Ghirardelli Chocolate
- » Guittard Chocolate
- » Hershey's Kisses
- » Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bars
- » Hershey's Milk Chocolate with Almonds Candy Bars
- » See's Candies
- » Tootsie Roll
- » Tootsie Pops
- » Donuts or bakery goods from Safeway, Giant, Vons, Wegmans

SPIRITS

- » Almaden
- » Barrelli Creek
- » Bartles & Jaymes
- » Black Box
- » Buffalo Trace
- » Captain Morgan
- » CK Mondavi
- » Carlo Rossi
- » Charles Krug

- » Chateau Ste. Michelle
- » Columbia Crest
- » Corbett Canyon
- » Dubonnet
- » Fairbanks, Franzia
- » Gallo Estate
- » Lejon Vermouth
- » Livingston Cellars
- » Mission Bell
- » Peter Vella
- » Rancho Zabaco
- » Robert Mondavi
- » Seagram's Escapes
- » Sheffield Cellars
- » St. Supéry
- » Tribuno Vermouth
- » Turning Leaf
- » Weibel

ADULT TOY STORES

- » The Pleasure Chest, New York
- » Babeland, New York

FLOWERS

- » Albertsons
- » Costco
- » Fry's
- » Gelson's
- » Pavilions
- » Ralphs
- » Safeway
- » Smith's
- » Vons
- » Stop & Shop

You also can check out union-made Valentine's Day movies. And remember that Trojan and Durex are both union-made.

This list created with the assistance of the AFL-CIO Communicators Group.

AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS

JAN-FEB 2026



RESTAURANTS

SUBMITTED BY UNITE HERE!

WASHINGTON, DC:

- » **STARR restaurants:** The Occidental, Osteria Mozza and Le Diplomate
- » **Knightsbridge Restaurant Group:** Modena, Bombay Club and Rasika

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
- » Four Seasons Beverly Hills
- » Hotel Bel Air
- » Langham Huntington

MARYLAND:

- » Merriweather Lakehouse Hotel

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

COMMUNICATIONS

SUBMITTED BY

Communications Workers of America

- » T-Mobile

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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TIME VALUE

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UL&STD thanks Ullico for supporting our mission.

EndNotes

By Rich Kline, President, UL&STD

The NLRB is Broken



The NLRB is a broken agency. Deliberately broken by President Trump to deny working people and their unions recourse in matters of labor law violations. He has removed a properly appointed NLRB official and left vacancies at the agency created to protect workers' rights. Only one person sits on what is supposed to be a five-person board. Hence, no action can be taken.

Trump might appoint two nominees to the NLRB to make a working quorum. If he did, they would undoubtedly serve as his henchmen in further undermining worker protections.

Other agencies meant to be independent and politically balanced like the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission have seen similar firings that the Supreme Court has yet to rule on. The Supreme Court would be overturning a 90-year-old precedent if it were to favor Trump's right to fire agency officials.

The Supreme Court could rule next year that the president has the authority to fire appointed federal officials. It supported



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Trump's firing of NLRB board member Gwynne Wilcox earlier this year. So the prospects are not good. The impact of such a decision would be immense, enabling the packing of agencies with political allies or the dismantling of agencies. In either case the agencies would be less effectual and unmoored from the missions for which they were established.

New York, California and other states have bolstered their labor agencies in the face of opposition from the Trump administration and its corporate supporters.

The NLRB has always reflected the political philosophies of the presidents who nominated and appointed candidates to serve at the various agencies. The agencies remained independent because incoming presidents did not clear out previously-appointed officials.

Now the autocratic aims and policies of the Trump administration threaten the government infrastructure that protects workers and all Americans. Unfortunately, the Supreme Court's conservative majority has a bias in favor of Trump.