

Know Your Rights

Federal Labor Laws Under the Railway Act Guarantee Employees the Right to Organize

Federal laws under the Railway Labor Act establish democratic procedures for working Americans in the airlines and railroad industries who want to organize a union. It only takes a majority of given class or craft at an airline to sign cards declaring their desire for union representation to get the ball rolling. Once the union files an application accompanied by a majority of signed authorization cards from employees involved, an election run by the Federal Government is held. The law forbids employers from interfering, coercing, or intimidating employees to prevent workers from exercising their right to freely choose their own representatives.

Federal Labor Law guarantees that employees shall have the right to organize to form to join a labor organization, and to bargain collectively through representatives of their choosing.

What Does This Mean? It means that employees have the legal right to help organize, to join and to support a union of their own choosing. This includes such activities as signing a union card, getting others to sign cards, attending union meetings, passing out union literature and talking union to other employees on their own time. It also states that employees have the legal right to deal with their employer through a union rather than individually. It gives employees the legal right to take such group action, as they feel necessary to gain their desired goals as long as these actions violate no other laws. It does not mean that employees have the right to carry on union activity during working hours or to allow their union activity to interfere with their jobs.

Federal Labor Law also guarantees that the company cannot discriminate against any employee in order to interfere with the right to organize a union. Employees are supposed to have a FREE CHOICE in deciding whether or not they want to use their right to organize. Anything that an employer does to interfere with this free choice is against the law.

If an employer penalizes an employee in any manner because of his union activity or belief the employer has broken the law.

- An employer should not question employees about how they feel regarding the union.
- They may not ask who signed cards, which employees are pushing the union, who attended meetings, what occurred at these meetings, etc. It is none of their business.
- An employer is not to make any promises of raises, promotions, or other benefits to influence employees in the exercise of their rights. An employer cannot take away, or threaten to take away, any benefits which you already have because of your union activity.

Our Right to Form a Union is Protected by Federal Law

Know What Your Employer Cannot Do

- Attend any union meeting, park across the street from the hall or engage in any undercover activity which places employees under surveillance to determine who is and who is not participating in the union program.
- Tell employees that the company will fire or punish them if they engage in union activity.
- Layoff, discharge, or discipline any employees for union activity.
- Grant employees wage increases, special concessions, or benefits to keep the union out.
- Ask employees about union matters, meetings, etc.
- Ask employees what they think about the union or a union representative.
- Ask employees how they intend to vote or if they are going to vote.
- Threaten employees with reprisal for participating in union activities. For example, threaten to, curtail operations, or reduce employees' benefits.
- Promise benefits to employees if they reject the union.
- Give financial support or other assistance to a union.
- Announce that the company will not deal with the union.
- Threaten to close, or move the business to avoid dealing with a union.

Know What Your Employer Cannot Do (cont.)

- Ask employees whether they belong to a union, or have signed up.
- Make distinctions between union and non-union employees when assigning overtime work or desirable jobs.
- Purposely team up non-union employees to keep them apart from those supporting the union.
- Transfer workers based on union affiliations or activities.
- Discriminate against union people when disciplining employees.
- By nature of work assignments, create conditions intended to get rid of an employee because of his/her union activity.
- Fail to grant a scheduled benefit or wage increase because of union activity.
- Deviate from company policy to get rid of a union supporter.
- Take action that affects an employee's job pay rate based on union activity.
- Threaten workers or coerce them to influence their vote.
- Promise employees a reward or future benefits if they decide "no union."
- Say unionization will force the company to lay off employees.
- Say unionization will do away with benefits presently in effect.
- Promise employees promotions, raises or other benefits if they get out of the union or refrain from joining the union.
- Start a petition or circular against the union or encourage or take part in its circulation if started by employees.
- Visit the homes of employees to urge them to reject the union.
- Bar employee union representatives from soliciting employees' membership on or off the company property during non- working hours.