



Hoffa files charges vs. Hub Teamsters chief

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Teamsters president James Hoffa will file charges against Boston-based Local 25 president Sean O'Brien for allegedly threatening to punish backers of rivals running against his allies in a Rhode Island union election.

Hoffa will appoint a panel from the Teamsters' executive board to hear the charges, according to John J. Cronin Jr., administrator for the Independent Review Board, which is charged by a federal court order to investigate allegations of corruption, domination or control in the Teamsters. "They also have the option of submitting an agreement to resolve the charges," Cronin said.

The IRB last week recommended charges against O'Brien — New England's top Teamsters leader — for allegedly threatening to retaliate against Teamsters for a Democratic Union members for exercising federally protected "rights to seek election to office and support the candidates of one's choice."

O'Brien told attendees at a campaign event for Joseph Bairos, the incumbent secretary-treasurer of East Providence-based Local 251 who's up for re-election, that anyone who "takes on" Bairos and his team "need to be punished, and they need to be held accountable for their actions."

O'Brien also is a regional Teamsters vice president and president of a council that settles disputes for New England locals. His spokeswoman declined comment.

A spokesman for Hoffa also declined comment. Hoffa has 90 days to hold a hearing on the charges and forward a report with any recommended penalties to the IRB. If the IRB approves the recommendations, it will file them with a U.S. District Court judge for sign-off. Penalties could range from a reprimand to expulsion.

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