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Unions Sue Trump Administration Over Move to Bust Federal Employee Unions

Lawsuit alleges union-busting executive order is retaliation against labor unions that have challenged the administration's illegal workplace actions

SAN FRANCISCO – Labor unions representing federal government workers across the country are suing the Trump administration over the president's attempt to override the law through executive order and strip more than one million federal government employees of their union rights.

The **lawsuit**, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California, alleges that Trump's executive order is a retaliatory attempt to punish federal employee unions that have been engaging in constitutionally protected speech. Unions have repeatedly scored court victories after suing in opposition to actions taken by the Trump administration targeting federal workers.

The new complaint cites a White House **fact sheet** that specifically referenced a statement made by the lead plaintiff, the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), which represents more than 820,000 federal employees.

Additionally, the lawsuit alleges that the Trump administration overbroadly applied the national security exemption to eliminate collective bargaining rights for over a million workers whose primary functions are not related to national security. Those employees work at agencies and departments like the Department of Veterans Affairs, Environmental Protection Agency, Food Safety and Inspection Service, and several others.

The lawsuit was filed by Bredhoff and Kaiser. Other plaintiffs joining AFGE in the lawsuit are the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), National Association of Government Employees (NAGE-SEIU), National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM), National Nurses United (NNU), and Service Employees International Union (SEIU), who collectively represent more than 950,000 federal employees.

"AFGE is not going to be intimidated by a bully who is throwing a temper tantrum because our union is beating them in the court of law and in the court of public opinion," **AFGE National President Everett Kelley said**. "Federal employees have had the right to join a union and bargain collectively for decades –



order to revoke union rights is a clear case of retaliation. But I've got news for him: we are not going anywhere."

"Federal workers and all AFSCME members have been making their voices heard in court and on the streets to protect public services and their jobs. They won't let billionaires raid our communities without consequence – and that's why they're facing retaliation," **said AFSCME President Lee Saunders**. "The extremists in this administration have made their contempt for public service workers clear and know that stripping collective bargaining rights means stripping away their power. We are filing this lawsuit to stop this illegal effort to silence those who speak out and protect free speech for all working people."

"President Trump's unlawful order isn't just an attack on federal workers—it's an attack on the public. NAGE members make sure veterans get the care they deserve, support our military, protect our environment, and keep our government running. By stripping away their rights, this administration is deliberately weakening public services and putting political loyalty ahead of skill and experience," **said NAGE National President David J. Holway**. "If this order stands, the ones who will suffer most are the American people."

"America's public service workers don't work for profits, politics, or for glory – they serve our nation. The President's unlawful executive order attacking federal unions is not only an attack on a million federal workers, but is a direct attack on all workers who seek a collective voice to bargain for a better future," **said April Verrett, president of the two-million member Service Employees International Union (SEIU)**. "This is blatant retaliation against brave workers who dared to exercise their First Amendment rights to criticize this administration's authoritarian overreach. The labor movement stands in solidarity, and we will not let this administration's union-busting tactics silence us."

"The VA nurses rely on collective bargaining to advocate for patient safety and ensure the best care for our veterans – most of whom are over 45 years old, and many of whom have a disability. Without these bargaining rights, we risk retaliation for speaking up and holding our employers accountable. Our veterans deserve nurses who can fight for their care without fear," **said Nancy Hagans, RN, president of National Nurses United (NNU)**. "This latest move by the administration is a clear attempt to intimidate us for standing up against its efforts to dismantle and privatize the VA, which studies have shown is a better place for veterans to receive care compared to the private sector. We will not be silenced by this bully behavior."

"This is the most significant assault on collective bargaining rights we have ever seen in the United States," **said Randy Erwin, National President, National Federation of Federal Employees (NFFE-IAM)**. "It is clear that this executive order is retaliation for federal unions fighting back against the Trump Administration's attempts to dismantle the civil service. This is yet another direct attack by the President not only on federal employees, but also veterans, working families, and the very fabric of our democracy. However, federal workers' collective bargaining rights are protected by law and President Trump does not



AFSCME's 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in communities across the nation, serving in hundreds of different occupations – from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers – AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public services and freedom and opportunity for all working families.

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