



## ILWU Statement of Policy in Support of the Rights of all Workers to Collectively Bargain

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) reaffirms its position that all working people must have the right to unionize and collectively bargain. These rights belong to all workers, whether they work in the private or public sector. Recent attacks on public sector union members in this country must be opposed outright by the entire labor movement.

On March 7, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security announced it was cancelling the collective bargaining agreement with the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Transportation Security Officers (TSOs).<sup>1</sup> TSA workers, who are represented by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), had signed a seven-year collective bargaining agreement in May 2024. Over 47,000 TSA agents at 400 airports across the United States lose union representation under this policy. AFGE is currently contesting this sweeping policy change in court.<sup>2</sup>

Just a few weeks later, on March 27, 2025, the current Administration signed an executive order that effectively ends collective bargaining for large numbers of federal employees across several federal agencies, under the false premise that unionized federal workers are a threat to national security.<sup>3</sup> Historically, the national security exception to collective bargaining rights has been narrowly applied to specific intelligence-related roles within the CIA, FBI, and NSA – not federal workers as a whole. This executive order strips over 1 million federal workers of their right to union representation; it is also being contested in court.<sup>4</sup>

The *Federal Workforce Freedom Act*,<sup>5</sup> which was introduced in the Senate on March 13, 2025, aims to strip collective bargaining rights from all Federal employees – the bill essentially

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<sup>1</sup> *DHS Ends Collective Bargaining for TSA's Transportation Security Officers, Enhancing Safety, Efficiency, and Organizational Agility*. (2025, March 7). U.S. Department of Homeland Security Transportation Security Administration. <https://www.tsa.gov/news/press/releases/2025/03/07/dhs-ends-collective-bargaining-for-tsas-transportation-security>

<sup>2</sup> *Eliminating TSA Officers' Union Is Clear Retaliation AFGE Says*. (2025, March 7). Afge.org. <https://www.afge.org/publication/eliminating-tsa-officers-union-is-clear-retaliation-afge-says/>

<sup>3</sup> *Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Exempts Agencies with National Security Missions from Federal Collective Bargaining Requirements*. (2025, March 28). The White House. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-exempts-agencies-with-national-security-missions-from-federal-collective-bargaining-requirements/>

<sup>4</sup> *AFGE Will Challenge Trump's Illegal Directive Outlawing Federal Unions*. (2025, March 31). Afge.org. <https://www.afge.org/article/afge-will-challenge-trumps-illegal-directive-outlawing-federal-unions/>

<sup>5</sup> *Blackburn, Lee Introduce Bill to End Backroom Federal Labor Union Deals*. (2025, March 13). U.S. Senator Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee. <https://www.blackburn.senate.gov/2025/3/jobs%20and%20economy/blackburn-lee-introduce-bill-to-end-backroom-federal-labor-union-deals>

prohibits all federal employees from organizing, joining, or participating in a labor union or engaging in collective bargaining. While this bill is unlikely to become law, the escalating attack on public sector workers is dangerous and demoralizing. In recent months, some states have also been moving to restrict the collective bargaining rights of public sector workers. For example, in February 2025, the governor of Utah signed a bill into law that bans collective bargaining for all public sector workers in the state, from teachers to firefighters.<sup>67</sup> Utah joins the states of North Carolina and South Carolina in fully banning collective bargaining rights for public sector workers.

In light of these increasing attacks on federal workers' rights, some members of Congress are looking to enshrine in law collective bargaining rights for federal employees. A group of lawmakers has reintroduced the *Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act* in both the House and Senate. If it's enacted, the bill would guarantee public sector workers the ability to join a union and collectively bargain. The bill has bipartisan support and the backing of multiple federal unions.

Throughout our history, the ILWU has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with other unions to defend the rights of the working class. Collective bargaining rights for public sector workers have been under attack for decades, and the ILWU, which has hundreds of public sector workers in our ranks, has always vigorously supported public sector workers' rights. These attacks are not just attacks on public sector workers, but attacks on the labor movement as a whole.

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<sup>6</sup> *Utah Bill Would Prohibit State's Public Sector Unions from Collective Bargaining - PSHRA*. (2025, February 14). Public Sector HR Association. <https://pshra.org/utah-bill-would-prohibit-states-public-sector-unions-from-collective-bargaining/>

<sup>7</sup> Schoenbaum, H. (2025, February 15). *Utah governor signs collective bargaining ban for teachers, firefighters and police unions*. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/utah-governor-unions-collective-bargaining-76b1fe205aac7b4097c1d0b4a1a13cc6>