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# **‘Mean Girls’: Union Violated Labor Law By ‘Ostracizing’ And ‘Humiliating’ Its Own Members On Facebook, Says NLRB GC**

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In what reads like a storyline from a movie portraying bullying at a high school, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has just released an Advice Memo from its General Counsel’s office finding that Teamsters Local Union 610 violated the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) by setting up a “secret” Facebook group that ostracized and humiliated some of its own members. At issue in the [case](#) was a facility where the Teamsters had negotiated a “two-tier” wage scale under which more senior employees received more in compensation than newer workers.

One of the union members in the lower-paid tier voiced concerns that only workers in the higher tier had seats at the bargaining table during ongoing labor agreement negotiations with the company. In other words, the employee was advocating that he and others in his wage tier have a “voice” in the process. The employee went so far as to circulate a petition requesting that employees from the lower tier be permitted to be on the bargaining committee. These sentiments apparently irked some people within the local’s leadership ranks, and the employee was threatened with having internal union charges being levied against him. It didn’t stop there.

A couple of the members who were displeased with the lower-tiered employee’s efforts to get a seat at the table set up a “secret” Facebook group

called the “Wolf Pack.” They invited many union members to join the private group. They declined access, however, to the employee who had raised concerns as well as to other union members who had expressed support for the employee’s views. Inside the group, the Wolf Pack members went on to berate and make fun of the employee; some even posted “obscene and violent messages” about the worker. The employee filed charges with the NLRB regarding the union’s actions on Facebook.

The case was submitted to the agency’s General Counsel’s office for an opinion as to whether the actions at issue violated the NLRA. The General Counsel’s office issued a memo concluding that, “the Union violated the Act because the Facebook group had a tendency to restrain and coerce [employees] ... by excluding, ostracizing, and humiliating them.” The memo goes on to state that the union should remove all of the derogatory posts in the Facebook group related to the employee, allow all members to access the group, and post a notice within the group stating the union was found to have violated their members’ rights.

This, unfortunately, is yet another **example** of a union acting contrary to the best interest of its members. It serves as an important reminder, however, that the NLRA protects **employees’** rights both with respect to employers **and** unions – and the NLRB is vested with authority to prosecute unions’ violations when they occur.