

Charge Filed Against Union Regarding “Forced Dues Payments”

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The National Right to Work Foundation has just issued a [press release](#) announcing that it has filed a charge against a United Steelworkers (USW) local union in Wisconsin with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) related to “forced dues payments.” Wisconsin is a [right-to-work state](#). Right-to-work laws are permitted under Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, and they make it unlawful for companies to require union dues as a condition of employment. In states where right-to-work laws are not enacted, most unionized employers have clauses in their labor agreements that require dues payments as a condition of employment – the clauses generally are known as “union seniority clauses.” At present, 28 states have right-to-work laws on the books. The National Right to Work Foundation maintains a [current list](#). At issue in the new case being brought against the USW are “window periods” many unions place on employees’ dues authorization agreements. While union security clauses are unlawful in right-to-work states, union dues deduction / authorization clauses are not. So unions often have employees sign cards in those states that amount to individual contracts authorizing dues deductions, and the cards contain confusing and narrow revocation windows that make it difficult for employees to withdraw. The charge against the USW challenges that practice. We’ll see what the NLRB does with the charge. Stay tuned.

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