

Bargaining Unit Work = UNION POWER

“Bargaining Unit Work” isn’t just a line in the contract—it’s our shield. It’s what keeps our jobs union jobs, protecting the work that belongs to us. Management fights it because they know it locks in our strength. We fight for it because it defends our livelihoods and our power on the job.

Management Rights — Restructures, Layoffs, Contractors and Fixed Term Workers

In the United States, Management has the right to direct, assign work, and set the focus of the organization. Meaning that YOUR WORK doesn’t belong to you, but to the organization. In tough economic times (like right now), the organization may try to move that work away from the union (and the benefits that come with membership) – to save money, and weaken Union power on the job.

Unfortunately, we’ve seen 2 methods that typically threaten Union jobs, and have made this a more serious concern to our members: Replacing members with contractors and moving permanent jobs to “fixed term” jobs.

Replacing Union members with contractors is a typical way that the company can avoid providing benefits and dealing with CWA. The second, is to replace regular full time Union jobs with “Fixed Term” (think of temporary) positions, which have

a limit in how long they exist and don’t require severance when they end. Since the majority of Fixed Term workers are usually looking for a permanent position, they are less likely to participate in Union activities or mobilization to fight for a better contract. These workers often fear that union activity will decrease their opportunity for permanent employment, and create a divide in staff and solidarity. These are Union busting behaviors that allow management to undermine the union and something that we are working to stop!

What We’ve Been Doing

CWA 1180, District 1 Staff Representatives, and Bargaining Committees have been drafting protections for Union jobs into all of our contract proposals, which includes that, in the event any layoffs, Contractors and Agency Temp workers are laid off first. We have also been putting in contract language that allows Management to hire a contractor or Fixed Term worker at their discretion, but only if it doesn’t result in the layoff of one of our members. We’re also working to address the increased use of AI in non-profit workplaces, by adding sections which insist that work created through artificial intelligence, must be checked over by a human worker.

The challenge is that many of our members often do not understand how important this contract language is to the survival of the Union at their place of work. Sometimes members are ready to trade these protections for other short term gains in the contract. As an example: members may agree to allowing a more temporary workforce that does the same work as union members, because Management might agree to 1% more in salary increases. The reality is that, while it may be important for members to get paid more, it won’t help them, in the long run, if they lose their job to a contractor - and there’s nothing the Union can do about it.

What Should We be Doing?

First and foremost it's essential that all members understand their contract, and the importance of each section. Second, always communicate with Shop Stewards whenever you feel the contract is being violated, if your contract already has these protections. Third, when your workplace is in its next round of negotiations - make sure that it has a significant “Bargaining Unit Work provisions” section, and empower your Bargaining Committee to demand job protections from management!

BARGAINING UPDATES



Human Rights Watch was recently hit with layoffs of 40 employees, 10 of which were Local 1180 members. Originally management was seeking to terminate 12 union members, but the union negotiated to redeploy some positions slated for termination into other roles

In the meantime, we are actively moving forward negotiating a unit expansion of staff currently working in non-union roles but which are not supervisory. This expansion would bring union membership at Human Rights Watch from 35 to 135.



Tutor Associates has been bargaining for our first contract since September 2023. We are in the end stages (hopefully) of negotiations. We’ve learned a lot of important lessons in the last two years, the biggest being that mobilizing has been our strongest tool to make progress.

Recently we organized a letter to our CEO, COO, and their lawyer in an effort to get access to health insurance. While, this time, we were not successful we DID build a lot of strength in our unit through this action, and used our momentum for wins on back pay and pay for training hours.



StoryCorps is in the process of creating a Bargaining Committee for upcoming contract negotiations. After successfully winning a unit expansion, we'll be pushing for new protections and safeguards for Mobile Facilitators as an important part of bargaining.

Our Stewards have recently been working to negotiate appropriate pay increases for our members who have been carrying considerably larger workloads since the two recent rounds of layoffs (10/24 and 4/25) and the resulting organization restructuring, as well as working to establish improved communication with HR.

The reformulated Labor-Management Committee's (LMC) first meeting was a productive, bridge-building working session. We've agreed to meet more often for closer collaboration, and the Union LMC representatives are building a resource guide for StoryCorps managers who supervise our members.

Have an **UPDATE** or **NEWS** from your Private Sector Shop?

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