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## The Heart of the Act

The heart of the National Labor Relations Act is captured in one paragraph, known as Section 7, which spells out the rights guaranteed to private-sector workers.

**Sec. 7. [§ 157.]** Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, and shall also have the right to refrain from any or all such activities except to the extent that such right may be affected by an agreement requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment.



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[www.nlr.gov](http://www.nlr.gov)  
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NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

# Protecting Employee Rights



[www.nlr.gov](http://www.nlr.gov)

TOLL FREE  
866.667.NLRB  
866.667.6572

This pamphlet is specifically designed to provide a general explanation to employees about their **workplace rights** under the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

**B)** By a union: threatening or refusing to process a grievance or to refer a worker to a job because employees do not support the union.

### What does the NLRB do?

**A)** Investigates complaints of interference or discrimination against workers due to group activities to improve working conditions, wages and benefits or due to union activities or due to a refusal to engage in those activities.

**B)** Holds elections to learn whether employees want a union or another group to represent them as a group when discussing working conditions, wages and benefits with their employer.

### How can employees bring a complaint before the NLRB?

Employees can contact the NLRB and file an unfair labor practice charge with the NLRB saying that they were interfered with or were discriminated against due to their protected concerted activities or their union activities or their refusal to engage in those activities.

Employees may also file an unfair labor practice charge if they believe a union has failed to represent them. A Board agent can help you if you ask to file a charge. There is no filing fee.

### What happens once a charge is filed?

A Board agent in one of the field offices is assigned to investigate. Statements are taken from the employee(s) and any witnesses. The employer or union is asked to provide its defense. A decision is made to dismiss or issue complaint. If the NLRB Regional Director agrees that there has been interference or discrimination due to employees engaging in protected concerted activities or union activities or due to a refusal to engage in those activities, he or she will try to settle the case before deciding to issue a complaint and going to trial. Settlement may include reinstatement, payment of lost wages,

reversal of the improper conduct, and/or posting of a notice advising employees in the workplace of their rights. If a trial is necessary, a field attorney of the NLRB may ask workers and others to testify before an administrative law judge. The NLRB does not charge for these services, and NLRB attorneys will present the case to the administrative law judge. However, if you desire to have your own attorney, you certainly may.

### What happens when a petition for an election is filed?

A Board agent in one of the field offices is assigned to process it. If there is a showing that at least 30% of an appropriate unit of employees at the workplace wish to be represented collectively by a union or by another group, a Board agent will hold a secret ballot election. If a majority of employees choose to be represented, the NLRB may certify that representative to bargain collectively with your company on behalf of the employees in the unit.

### How can the NLRB help you?

The NLRB can answer many of your job related questions. If your job related issues warrant the filing of a charge, the NLRB will fully investigate your charge and issue a timely decision regarding the merits of your case.

If your job related issues involve other laws, our information officers in one of our field offices will refer you to the appropriate agency(ies). Information officers can be contacted in person, by telephone, by U.S. mail or by webmail.

### When should you contact the NLRB?

If you are being treated unfairly because of your protected concerted activities, your union activities, or your refusal to engage in these activities, please contact the NLRB within six months of the unfair treatment.

## 1 What is the National Labor Relations Board?

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is an independent agency of the United States government that enforces laws to protect workers from certain conduct by employers and unions. The NLRB also holds elections to determine whether employees wish to be collectively represented.

## 2 Where is the NLRB located?

**A)** There are 51 field offices across the country, which can be accessed by going to our website at [www.nlr.gov](http://www.nlr.gov) or by calling our toll free telephone number at **1 (888) 667-6572**.

**B)** Headquarters are in Washington D.C. at 1099 14th Street, NW.

## 3 What rights does the NLRB protect?

**A)** Your right to engage in *protected concerted activities*, which are group activities that you are involved in to try to improve working conditions, wages and benefits.

**B)** Your right to engage *in union activities and to support a union*.

**C)** Your right not to engage in protected concerted activities or union activities.

## 4 What are examples of conduct that violate the NLRA?

**A)** By an employer: threatening, disciplining, or firing employees involved in protected concerted activities or in union activities.