



Spirit charged with Unfair Labor Practice after refusing to bargain with SPEEA

WICHITA, Kan. – An Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) charge was filed Monday (June 10) against Spirit AeroSystems after company officials refused to provide information nor answer questions during a formal, “step 3,” grievance meeting with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001.

During the meeting, Spirit officials said managers would continue to refuse answering questions. Additionally, this nonresponsive action would apply during 14 additional, already scheduled, meetings related to the company’s abrupt and arbitrary firing of 38 employees in March.

“Management refused to provide information, clarify the company’s position or answer any of our questions,” said Bob Brewer, SPEEA Midwest Director. “This is a complete repudiation of the established grievance process and Spirit’s own policies.”

Filed at the Region 7 office in Kansas City of the U.S. Department of Labor, the ULP charge reads: *“Since on or about June 10, 2013 the employer has refused to bargain with the Union and repudiated the third step of the grievance procedure on 15 terminated cases.”*

Only a few of the dismissed employees, many with decades of service, had any documented performance issues. None of the workers were given the chance to improve their performance. Instead, Spirit managers told each employee to get their personal items and leave. At the time, Spirit management said they were taking the abrupt action “to send a message to all employees,” Brewer said. Spirit’s unprecedented action is just the latest move by the aerospace firm to circumvent its own processes and disregard union contracts to arbitrarily dismiss/fire employees, said Brewer.

The step 3 meeting is part of the formal grievance process used to resolve issues between labor unions and management. The meetings are designed so the union and management can exchange information, clarify positions and ask questions of each other. Information is shared at these meetings in an attempt to reach a remedy or settlement based on the entire facts of the case.

In February, 2011, without explanation Spirit dropped the Performance Management ratings of more than 1,000 represented employees. This action continued in 2012 when 83 employees were put on Performance Coaching Plans, almost all who had no documented performance issues. The ratings are used to grant raises, give promotions and in extreme cases, terminate employees. Steps in the process are negotiated and included in the union contract between employees and Spirit.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 26,400 aerospace professionals at Spirit and The Boeing Company in Kansas, Washington, Oregon and California; and at Triumph Composite Systems, Inc., in Spokane, Washington.

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Following is a statement from SPEEA – IFPTE, Local 2001: