

SPEEA files unfair labor charges against Boeing after members illegally banned from leafleting



SEATTLE – The Boeing Company was charged Wednesday (Feb. 13) with new Unfair Labor Practices (ULP) after company security, acting on management orders, banned engineers and technical workers from leafleting at the Everett factory. The actions are in addition to reports of managers holding mandatory meetings with employees to interrogate and intimidate them regarding the current contract votes by the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001.

“We are extremely disappointed in the company’s misconduct,” said Ray Goforth, SPEEA executive director. “Boeing’s contract proposals should pass or fail on their merits. This illegal intimidation must cease immediately.”

Ballots were mailed Feb. 5 and will be counted Tuesday (Feb. 19) to determine if 15,550 engineers and 7,400 technical workers accept Boeing’s latest contract offers. Union leaders are recommending members reject the offers and grant their negotiation teams authority to call a strike if subsequent negotiations fail.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protects employees’ rights to engage in concerted (union) activity and prohibits employers from interfering in these activities.

Filed at the Seattle office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the new charge reads: *“The employer has interfered with, threatened and restrained its employees, members of the Charging Party’s bargaining unit, in the exercise of their Section 7 rights by, among other things, interrogating employees about how they are voting on the proposed contract and preventing employees from passing out leaflets related to the upcoming vote.”*

These charges are in addition to earlier charges (filed Jan. 2) the SPEEA filed after company personnel photographed union members marching at its Everett factory to support efforts to negotiate new labor contracts. Employer surveillance of union activities has consistently been ruled illegal by the NLRB because it has a tendency to intimidate employees into not exercising their rights to engage in union activities.

An earlier charge by SPEEA filed in October, and now waiting action by the NLRB, relates to Boeing seizing employee cameras and photographs of the protected union marches, along with videotaping the events.

Contract talks started in April 2012. In October, engineers rejected Boeing’s initial offer by 95.5 percent. Technical workers rejected the company’s offer by 97 percent. Existing contracts expired Nov. 25.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 26,560 aerospace professionals at Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kansas, and Triumph Composite Systems, Inc. in Spokane, Wash.

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