

## **SPEEA welcomes AARP Foundation Litigation to age discrimination case against Spirit AeroSystems**



**WICHITA, KS** – The Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, is pleased to announce that lawyers from AARP Foundation Litigation are joining with existing legal counsel to represent former employees who filed charges of age discrimination against Spirit AeroSystems on behalf of union-represented employees.

Originally filed by 10 SPEEA-represented employees in March with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the Office of Civil Rights (and now up to 30), the charges allege the aerospace supplier to Boeing and Airbus terminated hundreds of employees in 2013 because they were older and either they or a family member had a costly medical condition. The layoffs occurred after Spirit switched its employee medical coverage to a self-insured program. In the process of deciding who to lay off, the charges also allege, Spirit illegally disclosed confidential medical information.

“The addition of AARP Foundation attorneys brings an added level of expertise and resources to our efforts to bring this injustice to an end,” said Earl Carter, SPEEA Midwest vice president.

Representatives from AARP Foundation Litigation met with the laid-off employees, union officials and other legal counsel in Wichita last week.

Spirit abruptly terminated 221 SPEEA-represented engineers, technical workers and other professionals on July 25, 2013. In all, the company terminated 360 employees that day. All were called into meetings with management, told they were being terminated and then escorted off the property. Most were not allowed to return to their work stations to retrieve personal property. The terminations included employees who for years were rated as top performers.

Just three weeks before the terminations, Spirit changed its medical coverage for employees and families from an underwritten, provider form of medical insurance to a self-funded insurance program. The result of the change is that every dollar not paid out in medical claims is a dollar that remains in Spirit’s corporate bank account.

Various serious medical conditions affected employees in the charge-filing group, as well as their spouses and children, including workers and family members waiting on organ transplant lists, fighting cancer, suffering from costly rare medical challenges or with chronic medical conditions.

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### **About AARP Foundation Litigation**

AARP Foundation Litigation is a component of the AARP Foundation, which is AARP’s affiliated charity. The AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling

Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today; housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, strengthen communities, work more efficiently and make resources go further. Learn more at [www.aarpfoundation.org](http://www.aarpfoundation.org).

### **About SPEEA, IFPTE Local 2001**

SPEEA is a professional aerospace labor union representing 2,498 employees at Spirit AeroSystems in Kansas. Overall the union represents 25,005 engineers, technical workers, professionals and pilots in Washington, Kansas, Oregon, Utah, California and Florida. Organized in 1946, SPEEA is affiliated with the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), AFL-CIO. Learn more at [www.speea.org](http://www.speea.org).

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