

SPEEA calls on Boeing to stop holding families hostage over Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave



SEATTLE – Washington’s Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) is making it easier for workers to take time off from jobs to care for newborns or family members, unless you are a union-represented employee at The Boeing Company.

“Boeing needs to stop holding our families hostage,” said **Ray Goforth**, executive director of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001. “This benefit doesn’t belong to Boeing. It’s not a bargaining chip. Paid Family and Medical Leave is the right of every resident of Washington state.”

Ignoring repeated formal requests, Boeing uses a loophole in the state law to deny access to PFML to union-represented employees, including the nearly 18,000 engineers and technical workers represented by SPEEA in Washington. The result is new parents and employees caring for family members are unable to access the state program that provides up to 12 weeks of paid time off.

The loophole, which Boeing lobbied legislators to include, allows companies to withhold implementation of PFML from employees with a contract in place on Oct. 19, 2017. The loophole expires at the end of those contracts. SPEEA contracts for engineers and technical workers expire in October 2022.

“The purpose for the loophole was to grant implementation flexibility so as not to disrupt existing collective bargaining relationships,” said **Brandon Anderson**, SPEEA legislative director. However, Boeing is demanding unionized employees give pay and benefit concessions to gain access to the state-mandated benefit.

SPEEA has repeatedly pressed Boeing about the need for a meaningful family leave during contract talks, including the 2016 negotiations. Each time, the company refused. When the new PFML legislation was approved in 2017, SPEEA approached Boeing and was rebuffed again.

Changing or eliminating the loophole to provide access to PFML for SPEEA-represented and all union-represented employees is a legislative priority for SPEEA for this year’s legislative session in Olympia.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents more than 20,000 engineers, technical workers, pilots and other aerospace professionals in Washington, Kansas, Oregon, Utah and California.

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