

Senators Murray and Merkley to NLRB: Don't cave to GOP political pressure

Rep. Wu also weighs in on Machinists dispute with Boeing

U.S. Senators Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) have joined eight other U.S. senators in writing a letter to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) asking it to ignore political pressure it is receiving following its complaint against the Boeing Co. Moreover, Oregon Congressman David Wu sent a letter to the Machinists Union strongly supporting its petition to retain production of the Boeing 787 Dreamliner in the Pacific Northwest. In April, the NLRB's general counsel accused Boeing of illegally retaliating against union members for previous strikes in Washington and Oregon when it picked South Carolina for the second 787 production line. The Board is seeking a court order requiring the airplane maker to operate the second line in the

Puget Sound. Boeing has denied the allegation. An NLRB hearing is scheduled June 14 in Seattle. The complaint against Boeing set off a barrage of near hysterical criticism from Republicans. Several members of Congress, state governors, and state attorneys general called for the labor board to drop the complaint, then threatened to block future presidential nominees to the NLRB if it didn't. Some GOP members of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee demanded the NLRB reveal the details of its legal arguments and strategy in the complaint against Boeing. Merkley, Murray and eight members of the Health, Education, Labor and Pension Committee responded in a May 19 letter to the NLRB, saying that caving to political pressure would undermine the Board's decision. "The question at issue is a critically important one: whether workers who exercised their rights under the law

faced illegal discrimination and retaliation. This is a charge of serious misconduct that affects the rights of thousands of hardworking people," the senators wrote. "We do not write to express any opinion about the proper outcome of this case. However, we do feel strongly both parties have the right for this important issue to be decided in the due course of the administration of justice. This case should be determined based on the facts and the law, not based on politics." Further, the senators wrote: "We believe it would be inappropriate for the general counsel's office to compromise its litigating position by detailing its legal strategy in this manner." In addition to Merkley and Murray, the letter was signed by Democratic Senators Tom Harkin of Iowa, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico, Bernard Sanders of Vermont, Robert Casey Jr. of Pennsylvania, Al Franken of Minnesota, Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island, and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut. Wu's letter to the Machinists Union asserted that Boeing's transfer of production to South Carolina, a right-to-work state, was indeed a violation of the National Labor Relations Act. "There is extremely clear evidence that Boeing's plan ... is solely motivated by a desire to avoid complying with federal labor laws," Wu wrote. "I applaud the NLRB's investigation of this unfair labor practice complaint ... I will strongly encourage that (the) Board order Boeing to comply with the remedies recommended in the NLRB complaint."

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...EEOC lawsuit

(From Page 9)

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