

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Boeing and SPEEA announce tentative contract extension

A four-year agreement would extend the contract with engineering and technical professionals through October 2026.

The Boeing Company reached a tentative agreement Feb. 13 with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA) on a new four-year contract extension that would run through 2026, covering approximately 18,000 engineering and technical employees, nearly all of whom are in Washington and Oregon.

SPEEA's Executive Board has endorsed the offer, which members will vote on from Feb. 24 to March 9, 2020 via mail-in ballots. The current contract isn't set to expire until 2022.

Highlights of the agreement:

Annual salary adjustment Boeing and SPEEA will establish fixed salary adjustment funds for each year, 2020 through 2026, replacing the prior indexed formula.

Paid leave Boeing will apply the company's existing 12-week Paid Parental Leave policy to SPEEA-represented employees. By virtue of the contract extension, SPEEA-represented employees in Washington will now also be covered by the Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave Act.

Health benefits No change in plan design for medical, dental and vision plans. Beginning 2023, employees' contributions will be based upon their salary.

Employee Incentive Plan (EIP) The Employee Incentive Plan target will be raised from 3.85% of eligible earnings to 5% of eligible earnings.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

Is there forced labor in Oregon? New task force aims to find out

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum has appointed a 16-member Labor Trafficking Task Force to study labor trafficking across the state and identify ways the Legislature and other leaders can tackle the issue. Appointees include Matt Swanson, political director of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, and Sonia Ramirez, Wage and Hour administrator for the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries and a former lobbyist for North America's Building Trades Unions. The task force will be co-chaired by Oregon State Senator Kathleen Taylor, and in addition to organized labor will include immigration attorneys, law enforcement, district attorneys, representatives from the Mexican Consulate, and other state agencies.

Rosenblum announced the new task force Jan. 10 at the Oregon DOJ's second annual Human Trafficking Awareness Day event in Salem.

"Human trafficking includes both sex trafficking and labor trafficking, but almost all of our public awareness focuses on sex trafficking," Rosenblum said. "What we hear so far is that labor trafficking is very real, and it is happening under the radar in all corners of the state. I want this task force to dig into this ter-

rible crime. All sources suggest we lack the tools to identify, investigate, and prosecute labor trafficking in our communities. We need to change that."

Labor trafficking includes using threats of violence and coercion to force a person to work against their will, sometimes with no or little pay or inhumane conditions. Industries where labor trafficking may exist include domestic servants, farmworkers, factory workers, and other day laborers.

According to the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission there have been no prosecutions of labor trafficking under the relevant crime of "involuntary servitude" anywhere in the state.

The new task force will meet throughout 2020 and will make recommendations for consideration by the Oregon Legislature in the 2021 session.

"While significant work has been done to understand the impact of labor trafficking at the national level, there has been no organized attempt to gather information in Oregon. We hope to take a comprehensive view of the problem, and really look at how we can work to address this issue," said Attorney General Rosenblum.

NATIONAL

Trump NLRB marches back worker gains

Terms of the Democrats on the Board have run out, and Trump is in no hurry to replace them.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) — responsible for protecting workers right to join or form a union — is now led by two management-side lawyers and a former congressional staffer — all Trump-appointed Republicans.

The NLRB is an independent federal agency with a mission to uphold workers' right to form unions and bargain collectively. It's governed by a five-person board and a general counsel, all of whom are appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Board members are appointed to five-year staggered terms, which means one member's term expires each year. Unlike many other federal agencies, members can't remain on the board until a successor is confirmed.

Under the law that created it, the president gets to appoint three board members from his own party and two from the other major party.

But President Donald Trump has yet to nominate anyone to succeed two Democrats ap-

pointed by Barack Obama whose terms expired. Mark Pearce was termed out in August 2018, and Lauren McFerran's term expired Dec. 16, 2019. As a result, the NLRB has only Republican appointees for the first time in its 85-year history.

In December, the Trump NLRB announced a decision that significantly lengthens the time between an NLRB regional director's order that there be a union election, and the election itself. It overturns a 2014 Obama-era NLRB that elections be held as soon as possible — within 25 to 30 days of the determination by a regional director. In plain English, the new NLRB decision gives employers more time to stall elections and challenge who can vote and when.

The union election rules decision was published Dec. 18 in the Federal Register, to be turned into a federal regulation. That sets it in stone and makes it tougher to reverse in the future, reported Press Associates Inc. To add insult to injury, the GOPers declared an "emergency" justifying no public comments. The final rule goes into effect April 16, 2020.

In other recent NLRB decisions, the Republican majority ruled that employers may restrict the ability of employees to use work email outside of work time to discuss workplace issues, overruling a 2014 decision in Purple Communications, Inc. In that case, filed by CWA, the Democrat-controlled NLRB ruled in favor of the workers, recognizing that email has become a critical means of communication about working conditions and other issues.

In *Apogee Retail LLC d/b/a Unique Thrift Store*, the NLRB ruled that employers can prevent workers from discussing ongoing workplace investigations into illegal or unethical behavior, such as sexual harassment.

In *Valley Hospital Medical Center*, the NLRB ruled that employers can stop collecting union dues from members' paychecks upon expiration of a collective bargaining agreement. This decision allows employers to interfere with members' relationship with their union and makes it difficult for members to remain in good standing so that they can vote on union issues.

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