

WORKERS RIGHTS

Government report says NLRB is understaffed

It's official: The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)—the federal agency that protects workers' right to unionize—is understaffed and underperforming.

That's according to a March 29 report from the government's Government Accountability Office (GAO). The drop has been dramatic. In 2010 the NLRB had 1,733 staff. By 2019, that was down to 1,281, a loss of 452 employees, or 26%. All of the reduction came through retirements or resignations. And most of the reduction—414 employees—came out of the agency's 26 regional offices, like the ones in Seattle and Portland that administer union elections in the workplace and interact directly with workers when their rights are violated by employers. NLRB regional staff levels dropped from 1,238 to 824 in the nine year period, while DC headquarters staff dropped from 495 to 457.

Underlying the staff reduction is a budget that has held flat while losing ground to inflation. Taking account of the effects of inflation, the NLRB's \$274.2 million budget in fiscal year 2019 was 17% below its budget in 2010.

So it's no surprise that NLRB employees are increasingly dissatisfied. The GAO found the

NLRB ranked last in employee morale out of all 17 medium-sized federal agencies in 2019, according to an annual federal employee survey. Among regional office staff surveyed in 2019, just 35% felt they had a reasonable workload, and just 26% felt they had sufficient resources.

Staff reductions that dramatic might have jeopardized the NLRB's mission more severely if it weren't for the fact that the agency's caseload also declined, though by a somewhat smaller proportion. The number of union representation elections dropped by 31% from 2010 to 2019, and "unfair labor practice" cases—which account for 90% of the NLRB's workload—decreased by 21%.

The GAO did find that the NLRB has increased staff efficiency thanks to improved technology, reducing the time it takes to process case related documents for example. But some staff interviewed by GAO said that policies pushing for greater speed in processing unfair labor practice complaints are negatively affecting the quality of investigations and staff morale.

—DM

THE REPORT
<https://bit.ly/3cAb6YW>

...NewsGuild to Congress: Local news is in grave peril

From Page 1

found that employment levels held steady at broadcast TV news and cable TV news, and digital-only news grew from 7,400 to 16,090. But that still left 26,750 fewer working journalists. And it's local news that has suffered the most.

Invited to testify at a hearing on reviving competition and saving the press held by the Antitrust Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, Schless said approximately 2,100 newspapers stopped publishing altogether between 2004 and 2019, and at least 60 more have closed since the pandemic began. The collapse has created

an estimated 2,000 "news deserts" across the country—communities that have no source of local news. Schless said the crisis in local news is caused by a dramatic loss of revenue. That's because the ad income that supported the traditional business model of the news industry has migrated to Google and Facebook. Between 2004 and 2018, revenue of U.S. newspapers fell 57.2%, with ad revenue declining by 70.3%.

A bill introduced by Subcommittee Chairman David Cicilline (D-RI) would allow news publishers and broadcasters to collectively bargain with Google and Facebook for linking to their content.



APRIL 28 BEGINNING AT 12:30PM

Each year Oregon's unions gather in Salem to honor those who died while working or from work-related injuries and illness, and pledge to do everything within labor's power to make work safe. The 2021 Workers Memorial Day observance will be especially difficult this year. The toll of the pandemic on Oregon's

workers, families, and communities cannot be overstated, nor can the devastation caused by historic wildfires which leveled entire towns.

Please join the Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon's unions, and the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration to mourn all those who died as a result of workplace

injury or illness and to honor their memory and legacy by dedicating ourselves to do everything we can to make work safe.

The event will be virtual on April 28 at 12:30 p.m. on Facebook Live and YouTube. For details and to RSVP visit orafcio.org/events/2021/4/28/2021-workers-memorial-day

Machinists-Boilermakers Federal Credit Union

(DistW24 affiliation is required; please call the credit union for details (503) 210-2477)



Why: We gain a new relationship while you and your referral could gain \$200.00

How: Contact the Credit Union for eligibility.

When: NOW! YOU and YOUR REFERRAL will be placed in a drawing to receive \$200.00 directly into your accounts. *Details @ www.mbfcu.com*



THOMAS, COON, NEWTON & FROST

PORTLAND LAW FIRM SINCE 1980

Workers' Compensation

Construction Injuries

Death Claims

Personal Injury & Product Liability

Medical Malpractice

Social Security Disability

Mesothelioma

www.tcnf.legal

503-228-5222

Straight answers. No cost for consultation.

We ACTUALLY help clients apply for Social Security disability; we don't just claim that in commercials.



Raymond Thomas



James Coon



Cynthia Newton



Chris Frost



Sydney Montanaro



Scott Sell



Chris Thomas

820 SW Second Ave., Suite 200, Portland, OR 97204