

NATIONAL

# U.S. Senate confirms three union attorneys to NLRB

The confirmations, mostly along party lines, will give NLRB a worker-friendly majority.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The U.S. Senate confirmed three well-known union attorneys to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) last

month. The confirmations will bring a worker-friendly 3-2 majority back to the agency, along with a person from labor seated as its top lawyer.

On July 21, the Senate confirmed union attorney Jennifer Abruzzo as General Counsel. The vote was along party lines, 51-50, with Democratic Vice

President Kamala Harris breaking the tie. Abruzzo was Special Counsel for Strategic Initiatives for Communications Workers of America (CWA).

On July 28, the Senate confirmed David Prouty in a 53-46 vote. Prouty was General Counsel for New York-based Service Employees Local 32BJ. Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine, and Lisa Murkowski and Mark Sullivan of Alaska, joined all Democrats and Independents in voting for Prouty.

Prouty will replace Republican member William Emanuel, a union-busting attorney from Los Angeles whose term ends later this month.

Earlier in the day on July 28, the Senate confirmed Gwynne Wilcox by a 52-47 margin. Collins and Murkowski were the only Republicans to support Wilcox, who will be the first Black woman in NLRB history to serve on the Board.

Wilcox is a pro-worker attorney and partner in the Levy, Ratner law firm, whose offices are in the same building as the



Jennifer Abruzzo

headquarters of the Office and Professional Employees in New York.

Wilcox will fill a seat that has been vacant since 2018.

Abruzzo will succeed Acting General Counsel Peter Sung Ohr. Ohr, a NLRB regional director from Chicago, was appointed Acting General Counsel after Joe Biden was elected president. One of Biden's first acts was to fire General Counsel Peter Robb, a Trump appointee.

Prior to joining CWA in 2017, Abruzzo worked at the NLRB for 23 years in several roles, including as acting general counsel, field attorney, supervisory field attorney, deputy regional attorney in Miami, and deputy assistant general counsel.

The General Counsel's office wields key powers within the NLRB, which handles most labor-management relations disputes in the U.S. Her office decides what cases to bring and proposes rules that cover a wide range of labor-management issues, such as union elections.

## In Memoriam

MICHAEL D. SMITH:

June 23, 1953 - July 23, 2021

Mike Smith, a business representative of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, passed away July 23. He was 68.



Mike Smith

Smith joined the union when he was 18 years old, after taking a job with Myers Container. He worked there for over 20 years.

In 1995, Smith was elected as a business representative for Portland-based Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, and he was re-elected for several terms, serving until his retirement in 2006, at age 53.

Smith worked on the production side, and was involved in the lengthy CleanPak International strike that began in 1998. At the time, it was one of the longest strikes in Portland's history.

MICHAEL DAVID SMITH, also known as "Mikey," was born on June 23, 1953. He was the second oldest son of Dolores Madeline and Arthur Thomas James. He attended Jefferson High School, where he was a star football player. He graduated in 1971 and was offered two football scholarships, but instead went to work and joined the union. Smith was a volunteer coach in the Jefferson Pop Warner league and after retirement he coached offense and defense for the Reynolds High School freshman football team.

As a union member and official of Local 16, Smith attended numerous classes at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Maryland, as well as classes put on by the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon.

Smith married his high school sweetheart, K'Lynn Estelle Pulliam, in 1983. They had two daughters, Lauren Rae and Brittni Lynn.

Smith is survived by his wife and two daughter; a granddaughter; and five siblings.

A memorial service was held July 31 at the University of Portland. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the DePaul Treatment Center or Reynolds High School Football, 1698 SW Cherry Park Rd., Troutdale, Oregon 97060.

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