



## Protecting Government Employees

*“The Biden administration is putting workers’ rights at the center of its efforts to build our economy and middle class back better.”*

— International President  
Lonnie R. Stephenson



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# IBEW POLICY BRIEF

## GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

### Protecting Government Employees

Nearly every agency within the U.S. and Canadian governments relies on IBEW members to carry out their missions. IBEW members are employed across federal agencies, from the National Park Service and Department of Veterans Affairs to every branch of the military.

In addition to performing critical maintenance work on federal buildings and equipment, IBEW members work onboard ships, all types of government-owned transmission lines, navigational locks and dams, and in hydro- and steam-driven electric power generating plants, among others.

#### President Biden’s Actions to Help Public Employees

On January 22, 2021, President Biden signed an Executive Order that took several steps to protect the federal workforce by overturning a series of executive orders that sought to make it easier to fire federal workers, disrupt labor-management negotiations and restrict the scope of collective bargaining. The prior administration’s orders included:

- Attempts to eliminate collective bargaining, due process, and workplace representation rights for federal employees
- Provisions allowing federal employees to be hired and fired merely for political reasons
- Provisions banning the use of federal funds for diversity and inclusion training programs for federal employees and employees of federal contractors
- Restrictions on the use of official union time and access for union organizers in federal workplaces

In overturning these harmful policies, the Biden administration declared that the policy of the federal government is “to protect, empower and rebuild the career federal workforce” and “encourage union organizing and collective bargaining.” Furthermore, the Order directs the federal government to “serve as a model employer.”

#### Pending Priorities: Confirmation of President Biden’s FLRA Nominees

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) facilitates the right of federal workers to form and join unions, bargain with agencies and resolve unfair labor practice complaints. A fully functioning FLRA is necessary for the effective and efficient administration of federal labor-management relations, and ensures that workers’ rights of federal employees are protected.

During the prior administration, the functions of the FLRA and decades of precedent were ignored. Federal workers endured the imposition of unilateral contracts, unwarranted restrictions on union dues and official time, and rollbacks to their collective bargaining rights. In addition, the general counsel vacancy at the agency resulted in hundreds of unfair labor practice complaints languishing without adjudication. These actions hampered the ability of many federal workers to perform their duties in service to the public.

The IBEW supports the confirmation of nominees, who will help to restore the FLRA to its original mission of promoting labor relations between federal workers and federal agencies.

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