



Worker Retention

“Our members bring real-world experience that will be invaluable in this transition.”

*— International President
Lonnie R. Stephenson*



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IBEW POLICY BRIEF

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

Worker Retention

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) supports federal legislation that would incentivize employers to keep displaced fossil fuel workers working.

The IBEW is the largest labor union in the power sector. Approximately 85,000 members work at coal and natural gas power plants in the United States. As a result of efforts to limit climate change, many fossil fuel generation workers today are vulnerable to potential displacement due to the transition to cleaner forms of electrical generation, such as solar and wind power.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration found that between 2011 and 2021, nearly 89 gigawatts of coal-fired electric generation capacity was retired in the United States, about a third of total coal-fired generation capacity. In order to protect fossil fuel workers from displacement at no fault of their own and who are often among best paid blue collar workers in their communities, Congress needs to take action and ensure these workers are made whole.

One possible policy proposal would be to incentivize fossil fuel employers, primarily electrical utility companies, to keep displaced fossil fuel workers on their payroll and redirect them to perform other duties at the company. Such an incentive could be modeled after the Employee Retention Tax Credit (ERTC) that was created under the CARES Act.

The ERTC, which was originally designed for small employers, gave these businesses a tax credit of \$7,000 per annual quarter for a total of \$28,000 in annual tax credits for keeping an employee on their payroll. This policy could be modified to support the significant number of fossil fuel workers who will be vulnerable to displacement in the coming years as greater attention is placed on reducing carbon emissions in the power sector.

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