



# Navigating Labor: Federal & Industrial Perspectives



**Washington State**  
**Council of Fire Fighters**

**4th District Representative: Casey Yeager**

**Federal & Industrial Liaison: Scott Powers**



**WSCFF**

# Instructors



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# Agenda

- History
- Labor Structure
- Historical Political Action
- Call to Action
- Boeing Lockout Lessons Learned



# Overview

- Brief introduction to labor unions in the U.S.
- Explore the roles of private sector and federal labor agencies.
- Understanding key differences between both federal and industrial unions.
- Recognize the challenges these unions face.
- Examine the roles of federal labor agencies.
- Review Boeing Lockout and discuss tools and tactics.

# Key Events that shaped our history

- **Labor Movement of the 1930s:** Increased organization in response to economic hardship.
- **Civil Rights Movement:** Intersection of labor rights and civil rights, leading to broader inclusivity in unions.
- **Recent Strikes and Movements:** Examples of significant strikes that have impacted union visibility and power.



# Historical Event Shaping Unions

- **The Wagner Act (1935):** Established the right to organize and join unions.
- **Taft-Hartley Act (1947):** Limited union powers and introduced regulations.
- **Public Sector Union Growth (1960s-1970s):** Increased recognition of federal employees' rights to unionize.



# Why We Fight

- **What unions do for us:**
  - Promote a just, safe and equitable working environment
  - Secure reasonable working conditions and fair compensation
  - Bring democracy to the workplace
  - Give workers a voice at the table



# Private Sector Unions

- Organized groups of employees working for a privately owned for profit or nonprofit companies rather than government agencies
- Represent workers in the private industry



# Who do we represent here in Washington State?

- Hanford Local- Local I-24
- Boeing- Local I-66
- Tri-Med Local- Local I-98



# Federal Unions

- Federal unions are **organized groups of U.S. government employees** who work together to represent their interests, improve working conditions, and negotiate with federal agencies on behalf of their members



# Key Rights of Federal Employees

- Under federal law, employees can:
- Form, join, or participate in unions without fear of retaliation.
- Bargain collectively on working conditions.
- Access grievance procedures for workplace disputes.
- Be protected from unfair labor practices.
- Summary: **federal unions are essential advocates for government workers**, secure better conditions, protect rights, and ensure agencies operate with fairness and accountability.



# Federal Unions Continued: What They Do?

- Federal unions focus on **collective bargaining** over working conditions, workplace safety, grievance procedures, and other operational issues.
  - Rather than wages and benefits (which are set by Congress)
- **Negotiating agreements** with agencies to improve working conditions, safety, and procedures
- **Advocating for employee rights** and protections, such as fair treatment, anti-harassment policies, and access to grievance procedures



# Federal Unions (What they do) Continued...

- **Resolving workplace disputes** through formal grievance processes.
- **Representing members** in meetings, policy discussions, and during investigatory interviews.
- **Promoting transparency and equity** in federal employment, ensuring all voices are heard.



# Federal Unions in our State

- Navy Region Northwest- Local F-282
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord- Local F-283
- Bureau of Reclamation- Local F-304



# Who regulates Feds and Industrials Unions?



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# Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA)

- Resolves unfair labor practices.
- Decides negotiability claims.
- Adjudicates exceptions to arbitrator awards.
- Determines appropriate bargaining unit representation.



# National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)

- Oversees private sector labor relations
- Enforces the National Labor Relations Act.



# FLRA VS NLRB: Key Roles

- **FLRA: Facilitates collective bargaining and resolves disputes in the federal sector.**
- **NLRB: Administers elections for union representation and investigates unfair labor practices.**



# Current Challenges Facing Unions

## NLRB Challenges:

- Budget cuts and reduced enforcement capabilities.
- Limited ability to address unfair labor practices due to staffing issues.



# Current Challenges Facing Federal Unions

- **Executive Order 14251, eliminates collective bargaining across most government agencies.**
  - **Firefighters and Law Enforcement excluded.**
- **Attacks on agency funding leading to layoffs.**
- **Forced retirements impacting agency operations and effectiveness.**



# Impact of Challenges on Union Operations

- **Decreased ability to negotiate effectively.**
- **Fewer resources for legal support and representation.**
- **Potential decline in workers' rights protections.**
- **Increased difficulty for employees to organize.**



# How can we help?



# Why We Fight

## Voice at the Table

- Many decisions that affect the fire service are made by elected officials who often do not have a background in emergency response.
- The IAFF serves as the voice of frontline fire fighters when these decisions are made.



# Call to Action

- **IAFF**
  - Union member responsibilities
  - Support strategic campaigns
  - Be involved
- **WSCFF**
  - Be involved
  - Attend conferences
  - Know and use resources
  - Political Action



# Member Responsibilities

- Be the best in your profession.
- Know your rights and look out for each other.
- Learn everything you can.
- Bring your interests and talents to the local.
- Protect your voice through the political process.
- Help in the community with charities and fundraisers.



**STAY INVOLVED**



# Stay Connected

- **Follow WSCFF's social media profiles**
  - FB: Washington State Council of Fire Fighters
    - [facebook.com/wscff](https://facebook.com/wscff)
  - IG: wscffinsta
- **Visit our website**
  - [wscff.org](https://wscff.org)
    - Read our articles and updates
    - Find information about state, regional, and IAFF events
    - Access resources
- **Read WSCFF emails and newsletters**
  - Active members and retirees are added to our email database

The image shows a screenshot of the Instagram profile for the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters (@wscffinsta). The profile has 266 posts, 2,284 followers, and 314 following. The bio states: "Washington State Council of Fire Fighters @wscffinsta Over 9,000 WA union firefighters & paramedics #wscff #iaff 1069 Adams St SE, Olympia, Washington 98501 my.iaff.org/Web/Contacts/SignIn\_withCreateNewAccount.aspx?LoginRedirect=true&returnurl=".

Below the profile is a grid of images. The central image is a flyer for "IAFF PEER SUPPORT TRAINING". The flyer text includes: "When: April 25-26, 8 am-4 pm Where: Local 1276 Kenzenick 1150 Jiffers Lane, 200 W. Blumensaat Avenue, Kennewick". It lists learning objectives: "Develop a Peer Support Team for your department, Approach a brother or sister of concern, Establish trust and confidentiality, Determine whether access is developing, Refer the person to available resources". It also provides an email for registration: "Registration link in bio comments section, Space is limited! Participants cover their own lodging and meals." and "Contact: jordan.iaff@iaff.org".

Below the grid is a Facebook profile card for "Washington State Council of Fire Fighters" with 6.4K likes and 7.1K followers.

At the bottom right is a red graphic with the text "COUNCIL CONNECTION" and the WSCFF logo.



# Questions/Discussion Points

- **What are your thoughts on the recent changes affecting unions?**
- **How can employees better advocate for their rights today?**
- **What do you think is the biggest challenge facing labor unions today?**
- **How do you see the role of technology impacting labor relations?**



# In Summary

**Unions play a critical role in advocating for workers' rights in both sectors.**

**Challenges are ever changing.**

**Call to Action: Engage politically and with elected officials and focus on the importance of supporting union initiatives and understanding their impact on the labor landscape.**

