

Court Allows Trump to End Union Bargaining for Federal Workers

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A federal appeals court has cleared the way for President Donald Trump to enforce an executive order limiting collective bargaining rights for thousands of federal employees. The decision lifts previous injunctions, allowing agencies such as the Departments of Justice, State, Defense, Treasury, and Health and Human Services to operate without union negotiating requirements.

U.S. District Judge James Donato had initially found the order likely retaliatory toward unions critical of Trump's administration, potentially violating workers' First Amendment protections. However, the appellate panel found no definitive evidence of retaliatory intent and concluded that the administration would have pursued the policy regardless of union opposition.

Critics argue the executive action weakens union influence and allows agencies to more easily change workplace rules, discipline or dismiss staff, and limit employee avenues for challenging agency decisions. The American Federation of Government Employees, one of the largest unions representing federal workers, described the ruling as a threat to workplace rights and vowed to continue its legal fight.

Supporters of the policy maintain that the order falls within the president's authority, particularly for agencies involved in national security functions such as intelligence, counterintelligence, and investigative work. These supporters argue that the changes will enhance operational efficiency and reduce bureaucratic obstacles.

Legal challenges to the order have seen mixed outcomes in lower courts across the country. The decision from the 9th Circuit marks a significant shift in favour of the administration's position, though it may not be the final word. The case could still be reviewed by the full circuit or the U.S. Supreme Court.

If upheld, the ruling could have wide-ranging consequences for more than 900,000 federal employees, reshaping how workplace policies are negotiated and potentially limiting the future scope of public sector union

rights. The outcome may also establish a precedent on the extent of executive authority in setting federal labor policy.