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What Will The Company Say?

During the Organizing Campaign, the employer will do everything possible to stop you from having a real voice on-the-job. The following are just some of the things they will say. As you hear or see these things, refer back to this list. We have added the facts so you can hear both sides.

Dues & Assessments

Company: *“You can’t afford to pay union dues.”*

The employer may give you two paychecks, one of which is phony with dues taken out. Or he may bring in bags of groceries with a total on the receipt saying this is what you could buy with the money you spend on dues each year.

FACT: **You can’t afford NOT to have a union.**

Union workers do an average of one-third better than nonunion workers. When all employees of a particular company join together, everyone’s wages can improve. On average, union dues are equal to a couple of hours’ work per month. This is a small price to pay to win the difference between nonunion and union wages.

Company: *“The union is only interested in your money.”*

The company may give you “documentation” or newspaper clippings showing that the IBEW is losing money and therefore, needs your money to survive.

FACT: **The IBEW is one of the most financially secure unions in the world.**

The IBEW has lost some members but this is due mostly to manufacturing plant closings, such as Zenith that moved to Mexico. Management moves jobs, not unions.

Current IBEW members want to help other workers organize because every time we get a contract for a new group, it puts pressure on the employer to raise everyone’s wages.

Our financial reports, as governed by Federal Law (Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, As Amended), detailing our strong financial position, is available for inspection by any member.

Company: *“The union needs your money to give its officers fat salaries.”*

You may see copies of the IBEW Annual Report showing salaries and expenses.

FACT: **They company will not tell you about the outrageous salaries of its top officers.**

The company doesn’t want you to see what their officers make; so you can’t see their annual reports. The fact is, without YOU, they wouldn’t have any money for themselves. That’s why they want to stop you from having a union so managers can keep more money for their own pockets. The IBEW will match W-2 forms with company officials POSITION for POSITION.



Company: *“The union officials can raise your dues or charge you assessments anytime they want.”*

FACT: Unions are democratic organizations run by its members.

Only local union members and elected convention delegates can vote in a democratic manner to change the dues. This is protected by the IBEW Constitution and local union bylaws, and federal law (Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, as amended).

About Strikes

Company: *“Unions love to strike.”*

Companies talk as if the union’s whole purpose is to call strikes.

FACT: Workers join the IBEW to improve their lives, not to strike.

Among all U.S. unions, fewer than 2 percent of new contracts involve a strike. In fact, the IBEW has a record better than most in getting good contracts without the need for strikes.

Company: *“The IBEW can force you to strike.”*

The company may suggest that the IBEW will cause you to strike or to support someone else’s strike.

FACT: The IBEW never authorizes or causes a strike unless it is overwhelmingly supported by the workers who are directly involved.

No union official or any International Officer can order any strike. Only the members can decide by “SECRET BALLOT” Vote to go on strike if they feel the company is being unfair or unreasonable.

Almost all IBEW agreements contain NO STRIKE clauses during the term of the agreements. Disputes are settled by binding arbitration when agreed to by both the company and the union. Persons of good faith and character can always work out their differences if they really want to do so.

Union Control Over You

Company: *“The union will fine you for misbehavior.”*

The employer will cite the IBEW Constitution and have you believe the union will punish you for any number of things.

FACT: You only have to look at the history of the union.

Before you believe the company hype, check the local union’s record in the area. There are regulations in the IBEW Constitution, just as there are regulations in any organization (schools, churches, clubs, etc). The Federal Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959 protects members against improper fines. What could be fairer than that?

Company: *“By signing a card or voting yes, you sign your life away.”*

You will be told that the union bosses will dominate you.

FACT: By signing an authorization card, you are merely saying that you want representation. Read the card.

The employer has a large group of advisors including lawyers and other professionals who wouldn’t think of working for that company without a written contract.



If it's good for them, why isn't it good for you to have the terms of your employment spelled out in a union contract?

Company: *“the IBEW will take away your right to talk to management.”*

You will hear that if the union prevails, they will do all your talking for you, and that you won't be able to discuss anything on your own.

FACT: You would still have the same rights as you do now to discuss anything with management.

With a union however, if management will not address your problems, you have the full force of the contract behind you, enforced by arbitration and the courts, if necessary, all with your own representatives to assist you. Note that management does not mention the fact that if you have a union, you can request a steward's presence if management tries to discipline you (Weingarten Rights).

Company: *“The union will decide who gets laid off and who gets what jobs.”*

The company may suggest that some far-off union official decides these matters and will play favorites.

FACT: The workers decide what the fairest way to handle matters is.

Provided the company is fair and negotiates in good faith, nearly all matters can be handled fairly, and it is the workers' own elected committee that will develop proposals and then bring back a tentative agreement to the workers to either accept or reject.

Promises & Threats

Company: *“The employer may suggest that even if the union gets voted in, it won't do you any good.”*

They will suggest that they will bargain, but not agree with the union's proposals and therefore, you will never get an agreement.

FACT: Do you think for one minute that any company simply just gives in to the union?

Many big companies such as Florida Power & Light, Tennessee Valley Authority, General Electric, AT&T, to name a few, have all negotiated very good agreements with the IBEW, not because they wanted to, but because the process works. It will work for you too. Telling you that you can do nothing and a union will not help you, is a violation of the Federal Labor Law, Sec. 8(a) (1).

Company: *“You may lose what you already have.”*

The employer will suggest that you could get wage increases, that you could stay the same, or that you could end up with less. They may also suggest that the union will guarantee you won't lose anything.

FACT: IBEW members all over the USA and Canada can get better working conditions, wages, and benefits.

Would the IBEW have continued to exist for over 100 years if they made things worse for workers? Of course not. The fact is, the company will not guarantee you anything. A bona fide union agreement is the best guarantee you will ever have at work.



The day a majority of the workers vote “UNION YES” is the day the company can no longer change anything unless the workers agree to it. After your union is “certified” by the NLRB, the company is prohibited from modifying any conditions of employment except through joint negotiations. Of course, they won’t admit this, but that is the law (NLRA, Section 8(a)(5)). If the company believes they can get by cheaper with the union, WHY are they fighting it so hard?

Company: *“We won’t be one big happy family anymore if the union gets in.”*

The employer will suggest that they won’t be able to be flexible anymore or do nice things for the employees. They may even make several changes now to try to sway your vote.

FACT: Unionized workers and all types of management get along just fine with the unions.

In fact, the IBEW is known as a pioneer in many of the cooperative initiatives that are a model of smart labor-management cooperation today. Even if management makes changes now, without a “YES” vote, they can change their minds again at any time after the vote. To lock them in, you need to vote “YES.”

Company: *“Give us another chance.”*

They will promise to do better by you if they can just avoid interference from the union. But it’s only the upcoming union election that brings out those promises, all of which will be forgotten if there is no union.

FACT: A union contract is your only real guarantee.

If your employer is truly willing to make all these promises, they should be willing to negotiate a FAIR contract after you vote “YES.” They should be willing to PUT IT IN WRITING.

Some workers have listened to management’s promises only to find out the hard way, that most promises are forgotten after the union is no longer a threat to the company’s power.

Reference Sources:

National Labor Relations Act

The Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959



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