

**Opening Statement of Ranking Member Mark DeSaulnier (CA-10)**

Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

*"Examining the Policies and Priorities of the NLRB"*

Thursday, June 4, 2026 | 10:15 a.m.

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here and for your service.

Today's hearing is an important one in many regards, as we will discuss the [National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)], the only federal agency that protects the rights of tens of millions of Americans who work every day and allow[s] them to organize if they choose to have a voice in their workplaces.

I come to this hearing with a perspective that many of you know, as a former small business owner, but also as a former member of a labor union: Local 2 in San Francisco, [with] UNITE HERE many years ago, and Local 170 with the Teamsters in Wooster, Massachusetts. I wouldn't have gotten to college without the Teamsters 170 in Wooster. And I wouldn't have been able to save enough money to open my own business if it wasn't for the Local 2 in San Francisco, [where I] learned the restaurant business. I know firsthand the benefits of membership and the power of unions, and the power of employees, whether they be organized or not organized.

Right now, unions [are] overwhelmingly popular among working Americans across party lines. Recent [polling](#) suggests that almost 70 percent of adults approve of unions, because Americans know they need a seat at the table to advocate for their rights in a moment where America has the most concentrated wealth in the history of this country, similar [to] or worse than the Gilded Age. American workers need a voice.

Today's hearing comes at a time when CEOs at big companies are taking bigger and bigger checks while workers continue to struggle. Just last week, a new [survey](#) found that it would take the median worker 200 years to earn what their CEO earned in a single year, as opposed to the 50s and 60s, where CEO pay was about 30 times the amount of their average worker; now it's in the thousands of times. Unions are critical to fixing our rising inequality by leveling the playing field and empowering workers to collectively bargain for higher wages, safer workplaces, and better benefits.

Despite claiming to support working people, the Trump Administration has been tipping the scales in favor of billionaires and corporations — neutrality, I guess, is in the eyes of the beholder — stripping away organizing rights and shielding bad employers from accountability. Last January, President Trump ordered the unprecedented firing of NLRB Member Gwynne Wilcox, stripping the NLRB of its quorum and preventing it from doing its vital work. The President has taken repeated and unprecedented action to leverage control over the nonpartisan, independent NLRB, giving sweetheart deals to his billionaire allies and leaving workers behind in the process.

These attacks, combined with a severe staffing shortage at the agency, are undermining workers' ability to seek recourse for unfair labor practices. There are 90,000 workers for every one NLRB caseworker. Let me repeat that: 90,000 American workers for every one NLRB caseworker. Workers are being mistreated, unions are being undermined by big corporations, and the Trump Administration's only response to the enormous backlog of cases before the NLRB is to [reorganize] them. This is a good step.

Workers are their unions, and attacking a union is an attack on the workers who make up that union.

Forming a union must be a right, not a fight. To restore workers' power, Congress must pass the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act*, fully fund the NLRB, and protect its independence from political influence.

Finally, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record a letter from nurses at Saint Mary of Nazareth Hospital in Chicago, Illinois, alleging retaliatory actions by management against nurses seeking to organize.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.