



UNION MEMBER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

The Union Member's Bill of Rights, Title I of the LMRDA, guarantees the following democratic rights to all union members:

Union members have equal rights and privileges to:

- nominate candidates;
- vote in elections or referendums;
- attend, participate, and vote in union meetings;
- have secret ballot votes on rates of dues, initiation fees, and assessments;

These rights are subject to reasonable rules in the union constitution and/or bylaws.

Free speech, including the right to:

- criticize union officials;
- express viewpoints at union meetings (subject to reasonable rules of conduct);
- distribute literature;
- hold separate meetings without interference from union officials;

Due process is required in internal union disciplinary hearings, including:

- the right to specific, written charges;
- the right to confront and cross-examine accusers;
- adequate time to prepare a defense;
- the right to a full and fair hearing and a decision based on the evidence.

You may be disciplined for the following activities:

- participating in wildcat strikes;
- advocating decertification of the union;
- nonpayment of dues;
- crossing picket lines;
- other acts which interfere with the union's legal obligations or threaten its existence.

Access to information:

- The union must send you a copy of your collective bargaining agreement (union contract) including supplements and possible hiring hall rules if you request it.
- Your union must let you inspect other members' contracts at the union office.
- Most unions must send financial reports to the Department of Labor ("OLMS")
- For good cause you may inspect your union's financial documents.

No retaliation:

- The union may not retaliate against you for exercising your protected rights.
- The union may not retaliate against you for suing the union to enforce these rights.
- Your employer may not retaliate against you for exercising your rights within your union.

HOW TO ENFORCE THESE RIGHTS

In most cases, you must exhaust internal union procedures before you can sue. The internal procedures are described in the Union's constitution and/or bylaws. If you do not agree with the result, or if the process takes more than four months, you may file a lawsuit in federal district court for injunctive relief, restoration of your rights and money damages. You must hire your own attorney to represent you in a lawsuit. If you are denied a copy of your contract, you may file a complaint with the Department of Labor which will investigate and has authority to bring a lawsuit on your behalf.



Learn more about the Association for Union Democracy (AUD) can help you assert your rights at uniondemocracy.org

Email: info@uniondemocracy.org

