



# IBEW POLICY BRIEF

## Chapter 9: Protecting Government Employees

Nearly every agency within the U.S. and Canadian governments relies on IBEW members to carry out their missions. Government sector members of the IBEW work across federal agencies from the National Park Service and Department of Veterans Affairs to every military branch.

In addition to performing critical maintenance work on federal buildings and equipment, IBEW members work on ships, all types of government-owned transmission lines, navigational locks and dams, U.S. Capitol buildings, and hydro- and steam-driven electric power generating plants, among others.

The U.S. government employs many IBEW members, providing crucial electrical services across various government agencies. These skilled workers play essential roles in defense activities, naval and Coast Guard shipyards, federal buildings and equipment maintenance, communication projects, navigational locks and dams, and electric power generation plants. Federal agencies, including branches of the armed services, the General Services Administration, NASA, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, and Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as on projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Bonneville Power Administration, employ members of the IBEW.

### Pending Priorities

#### The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act

The IBEW and AFL-CIO support enacting the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, legislation that allows public sector employees to join a union and bargain collectively. This legislation became necessary after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 2018 on the case *Janus v. AFSCME*. The decision stripped public employee unions of their ability to collect fees for the representation they are legally required to provide workers. In addition, the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act would help level the playing field for essential workers by establishing a minimum standard of collective bargaining rights states and localities must provide.

The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act would empower the FLRA to protect all government employees' rights in states that fail to offer fundamental collective bargaining rights. This protection includes state, territorial, and local government employees. The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act allows public sector employees to:

- Form, join, and assist unions to bargain collectively and to engage in other collective activities to improve working conditions
- Have their union recognized by their public employer through democratic procedures
- Have a procedure for resolving impasses in collective bargaining
- Authorize the deduction of fees to support a union to the extent permitted by law

### **Government Shutdowns**

The IBEW strongly opposes any government shutdown. IBEW members are critical in providing quality service for various federal agencies, particularly those procuring national defense assets like naval submarines. The IBEW brings a unique expertise to national security. A government shutdown could disrupt essential procurement processes, leading to delays and potential vulnerabilities in defense capabilities.

The overall impact of shutdowns includes financial instability for federal employees, decreased efficiency in government operations, uncertainty, disruption of critical services, and a decline in morale among those serving our nation in these vital roles.

The IBEW calls for prioritizing the well-being of the federal workforce and the nation's stability, urging efforts to avoid government shutdowns and allow public servants to continue their essential work without interruption.

### **Domestic Shipbuilding**


The IBEW staunchly supports and advocates for the prioritization of domestic shipbuilding as a crucial component of both economic and national security. From the IBEW's perspective, investing in and promoting domestic shipbuilding industries not only bolsters the country's economic strength but also safeguards critical infrastructure.

The IBEW emphasizes the creation and retention of good-quality jobs for skilled IBEW workers who build and maintain some of our nation's most critical infrastructure, supporting our national security and fostering a skilled labor force that contributes to the overall competitiveness of the nation's shipbuilding sector.

By prioritizing domestic shipbuilding, the IBEW aims to ensure that the industry remains vibrant, technologically advanced, and capable of meeting the ever-evolving needs of the nation.

Furthermore, the IBEW contends that supporting domestic shipbuilding is essential for maintaining a resilient and self-reliant national defense strategy. A robust shipbuilding industry ensures the timely production of naval vessels, providing the military with the tools necessary to safeguard the country's maritime interests and national security. The IBEW argues that relying on foreign shipyards for critical naval assets could pose risks to national security, as it may expose the nation to potential disruptions in the supply chain or compromise sensitive technologies. In essence, prioritizing domestic shipbuilding aligns with the IBEW's commitment to fostering economic prosperity, creating jobs, and safeguarding the nation's security through a resilient and self-sufficient shipbuilding industry.

### Chapter Resources

Hyperlink	URL	QR
The Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act Resources:		
<a href="#">H.R.5727 - Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2021</a>	<a href="https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5727?s=1&amp;r=9#:~:text=This%20bill%20provides%20minimum%20collective,by%20certain%20public%20safety%20workers.">https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/5727?s=1&amp;r=9#:~:text=This%20bill%20provides%20minimum%20collective,by%20certain%20public%20safety%20workers.</a>	

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