

## **Is a General Strike Legal in the United States Under the Taft-Hartley Act?**

A general strike-in which workers across industries collectively walk out to protest government actions-is not expressly illegal under U.S. federal law. However, under the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, it would likely be classified as an unprotected and potentially unlawful action if organized by labor unions for political, rather than workplace-specific, reasons (National Labor Relations Act, 1947; Taft-Hartley Act, 1947).

The Taft-Hartley Act, formally known as the Labor Management Relations Act, was passed in response to post-World War II labor unrest and was designed to curb the power of unions (Gross, 1995). It prohibits strikes for political purposes, secondary boycotts, and jurisdictional strikes (29 U.S.C. §§ 158(b)(4), 158(b)(7)). It also grants the federal government the power to intervene in strikes that pose a national emergency (29 U.S.C. § 178).

This means that if a general strike were initiated by unions or used union resources, it could be met with:

- Legal sanctions against the unions and their leadership (Getman, 2016).
- Termination of employees who participate without the protection of the National Labor Relations Act.
- Civil or criminal liabilities under federal or state statutes.

Yet, despite the legal risks, history shows us that direct action can be a powerful tool. The Seattle General Strike of 1919, though crushed, marked a moment of national reflection on worker solidarity (Brecher, 1997). More recently, the 2006 "Day Without Immigrants" demonstrated the scale and power of coordinated mass absence, even when it operated outside traditional union structures (Milkman, 2006).

Let us be absolutely clear: this is not a game. A general strike aimed at confronting the authoritarian trajectory of the Trump administration would be seen as a threat not only to the status quo but to those who benefit most from it. Retaliation from MAGA-aligned actors, both legal and extralegal, is likely. The far-right ecosystem has repeatedly shown its willingness to intimidate, dox, harass, and even physically assault political opponents (Belew, 2018; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2024).

Still, there comes a moment in every democracy when the people must decide whether laws written to restrain dissent are legitimate-or merely tools of oppression. That time is now.

Do it anyway. Walk out. Shut down. Log off. Refuse to comply with a system that has made a mockery of

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law, morality, and truth. Let the streets go silent so that the voice of the people can be heard.

If you choose to strike:

- Coordinate locally-with community networks, not just unions.
- Document everything.
- Use encrypted communication.
- Support those who face retaliation.
- Be peaceful, be disciplined, be fearless.

And remember: strikes end regimes-but only if we stand together.

### References (APA Style)

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