

Congressional intervention in SSA Collective Bargaining Crisis

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Although Congress rarely intervenes in labor/management disputes, the current situation with respect to bargaining over the union contract is so outrageous and illegal, that Congress must be convinced to step in. However, Congress has already passed a law requiring that labor and management conduct contract negotiations in good faith. Therefore, a legal challenge remains the most direct avenue for reversing management's efforts.

This does not mean that Congress cannot play an effective role in bringing pressure to bear on the Trump Administration and SSA to rethink their approach to contract negotiations. Already, letters have been written to SSA and signed by many lawmakers calling the agency to task for its bad faith and unwillingness to consider union proposals. In addition, we will be urging Congressional Committees to hold hearings intended to shine a spotlight on SSA's illegal actions.

The single most effective action Congress can take, however, would be to use its power of the purse to threaten budget cuts unless the agency reopens negotiations and commits to an equitable process for dispute resolution such as mediation/arbitration by an independent individual selected jointly by both parties. Given the fact that the House of Representatives has a Democratic, labor friendly majority, this strategy is being explored.