

**APPEALS COURT UPHOLDS EXECUTIVE ORDERS WEAKENING
FEDERAL UNIONS**

This month the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia overturned a lower court's decision that had blocked three executive orders issued by the Trump Administration that target federal employee unions. The three-judge panel reversed the lower courts decision, citing lack of jurisdiction to decide the issue. The executive orders are likely to continue to be challenged in the courts.

One of the executive orders in question speeds up the timeline for unions and agencies to conduct contract negotiations. Another reduces the amount of time a federal employee has to improve his or her performance before being fired. Union employee's use of "official time," hours that union representatives could devote to union-related work while on the clock, was also cut by one of the executive orders.

Federal employee unions had successfully challenged the administration's unilateral changes in the executive orders in the district court. The judge in the district court case held that the administration could not make the changes without meeting the unions at the bargaining table first. The panel of the appeals court reversed, stating that the challenges brought by the unions had to go through the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA), and were not properly decided by the court. With the administration selecting members of the FLRA, the agency has been issuing more management friendly decisions. It is expected that the executive orders will face further legal challenges from the federal employee unions.

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