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Labor board to prosecute auto workers union

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GAFFNEY, S.C. - A national labor board says it wants to prosecute the United Auto Workers union for unlawfully blocking a wage increase for Freightliner workers.

But the UAW said the workers did receive wage increases from the company, and a settlement has been reached.

After refusing to enter a settlement agreement for months, a news release from the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation said Wednesday the UAW faces prosecution for unfair labor practices.

The National Labor Relations Board General Counsel will prosecute the UAW union for blocking a wage increase for Gaffney-based Freightliner workers.

"The UAW has signed a settlement of the case," said Roger Kerson, UAW assistant director. "Parties will have settled before the trial takes place."

Kerson said workers have a free choice.

"Freightliner plants have done so," he said. "Workers have gotten raises, better health care and has gotten safety conditions improved. That's worked out well. Now the workers have a choice at Gaffney, too."

NLRB's Region 11 office in Winston-Salem, N.C., said it will seek an order against both Freightliner and the UAW for unfair labor practices at an August 22 trial. The office issued a formal complaint in response to unfair labor charges brought by National Right to Work Foundation attorneys for Freightliner employees.

Two Freightliner employees asked their foundation attorneys to file charges in 2003 after UAW officials vetoed the long-scheduled and promised pay increase. This effectively required a freeze on pay raises at the Gaffney plant, apparently until the employees agreed to unionization.

"This is just the latest example of UAW and Freightliner officials working hand-in-glove to corral workers into union ranks whether they like it or not," said Stefan Gleason, vice president of the NRWF.

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