

U.S. Steel Shareholder Meeting Question
David Almasi, Vice President
The National Center for Public Policy Research, April 24, 2018

I'm David Almasi of the National Center for Public Policy Research.

When was the last time your workers voted on their representation? I'm not talking about the 2016 contract between management and the United Steelworkers Union.¹ How about the last time they got to decide if they even want the United Steelworkers to represent them?

A few years ago, the Center for Union Facts used government data to determine that just over seven percent of current employees actually voted to certify the union representing them.²

With this lock on power, concerns about union spending,³ corruption⁴ and politicking are very real. Consider that last factor. While Donald Trump didn't lose union households by a large margin,⁵ Open Secrets reports that the Republican party received no money from the United Steelworker Union in 2016.⁶ By contrast, U.S. Steel's PAC spending was more politically equitable.⁷

This is obviously unsettling for some union members. They would reportedly love to have a choice in representation. A 2017 survey of union members commissioned by Professor Lloyd Corder of Carnegie Mellon University found over 70 percent "think that they should have the right to vote regularly on which union represents them."⁸

Congress understands this concern and has proposed a solution. The "Employee Rights Act" would amend the National Labor Relations Act to mandate an election on union representation after there's been more than 50 percent turnover of a bargaining unit.

Trump Administration changes in trade policy emboldened you to restart part of your Granite City Works and rehire hundreds of laid-off workers.⁹ Local 1899 just elected officers. But, rather than returning to business as usual, isn't this a golden opportunity to let workers determine if they want to chart a new course?

How about giving at least the Granite City workers the ability to decide if they want to continue under the United Steelworkers Union or choose another manner of representation?

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- ¹ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/post-tribune/news/ct-ptb-mittal-steel-vote-st-0202-20160201-story.html>
- ² https://www.unionfacts.com/downloads/Union_Tenure_Elections.pdf
- ³ <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/10/labor-union-bosses-salaries-put-big-in-big-labor/>
- ⁴ http://www.cleveland.com/court-justice/index.ssf/2017/06/former_local_united_steelworke_2.html
- ⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/10/donald-trump-got-reagan-like-support-from-union-households/?utm_term=.316ca3cff75a
- ⁶ <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/totals.php?id=D000000102&type=P&cycle=2016>
- ⁷ <https://www.opensecrets.org/pacs/pacgot.php?cmte=C00030676&cycle=2016>
- ⁸ https://www.npri.org/docLib/20170815_NEFWStudy2017.pdf
- ⁹ <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-biz-us-steel-granite-city-illinois-plant-restart-20180307-story.html>