

§ 173. Functions of Service**(a) Settlement of disputes through conciliation and mediation**

It shall be the duty of the Service, in order to prevent or minimize interruptions of the free flow of commerce growing out of labor disputes, to assist parties to labor disputes in industries affecting commerce to settle such disputes through conciliation and mediation.

(b) Intervention on motion of Service or request of parties; avoidance of mediation of minor disputes

The Service may proffer its services in any labor dispute in any industry affecting commerce, either upon its own motion or upon the request of one or more of the parties to the dispute, whenever in its judgment such dispute threatens to cause a substantial interruption of commerce. The Director and the Service are directed to avoid attempting to mediate disputes which would have only a minor effect on interstate commerce if State or other conciliation services are available to the parties. Whenever the Service does proffer its services in any dispute, it shall be the duty of the Service promptly to put itself in communication with the parties and to use its best efforts, by mediation and conciliation, to bring them to agreement.

(c) Settlement of disputes by other means upon failure of conciliation

If the Director is not able to bring the parties to agreement by conciliation within a reasonable time, he shall seek to induce the parties voluntarily to seek other means of settling the dispute without resort to strike, lock-out, or other coercion, including submission to the employees in the bargaining unit of the employer's last offer of settlement for approval or rejection in a secret ballot. The failure or refusal of either party to agree to any procedure suggested by the Director shall not be deemed a violation of any duty or obligation imposed by this chapter.

(d) Use of conciliation and mediation services as last resort

Final adjustment by a method agreed upon by the parties is declared to be the desirable method for settlement of grievance disputes arising over the application or interpretation of an existing collective-bargaining agreement. The Service is directed to make its conciliation and mediation services available in the settlement of such grievance disputes only as a last resort and in exceptional cases.

(e) Encouragement and support of establishment and operation of joint labor management activities conducted by committees

The Service is authorized and directed to encourage and support the establishment and operation of joint labor management activities conducted by plant, area, and industrywide committees designed to improve labor management relationships, job security and organizational effectiveness, in accordance with the provisions of section 175a of this title.

(f) Use of alternative means of dispute resolution procedures; assignment of neutrals and arbitrators

The Service may make its services available to Federal agencies to aid in the resolution of

disputes under the provisions of subchapter IV of chapter 5 of title 5. Functions performed by the Service may include assisting parties to disputes related to administrative programs, training persons in skills and procedures employed in alternative means of dispute resolution, and furnishing officers and employees of the Service to act as neutrals. Only officers and employees who are qualified in accordance with section 573 of title 5 may be assigned to act as neutrals. The Service shall consult with the agency designated by, or the interagency committee designated or established by, the President under section 573 of title 5 in maintaining rosters of neutrals and arbitrators, and to adopt such procedures and rules as are necessary to carry out the services authorized in this subsection.

(June 23, 1947, ch. 120, title II, § 203, 61 Stat. 153; Pub. L. 95-524, § 6(c)(1), Oct. 27, 1978, 92 Stat. 2020; Pub. L. 101-552, § 7, Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2746; Pub. L. 102-354, § 5(b)(5), Aug. 26, 1992, 106 Stat. 946; Pub. L. 104-320, § 4(c), Oct. 19, 1996, 110 Stat. 3871.)

Editorial Notes**REFERENCES IN TEXT**

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (c), was in the original "this Act" meaning act June 23, 1947, ch. 120, 61 Stat. 136, known as the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, which is classified principally to this subchapter and subchapters III (§171 et seq.) and IV (§185 et seq.) of this chapter. For complete classification of this act to the Code, see Tables.

AMENDMENTS

1996—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104-320 substituted "the agency designated by, or the interagency committee designated or established by, the President under section 573 of title 5" for "the Administrative Conference of the United States and other agencies".

1992—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 102-354 substituted "section 573" for "section 583".

1990—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 101-552 added subsec. (f).

1978—Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 95-524 added subsec. (e).

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**APPLICABILITY TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS**

Amendment by Pub. L. 95-524 not to affect terms and conditions of any collective bargaining agreement whether in effect prior to or entered into after Oct. 27, 1978, see section 6(e) of Pub. L. 95-524, set out as a note under section 175a of this title.

§ 174. Co-equal obligations of employees, their representatives, and management to minimize labor disputes

(a)¹ In order to prevent or minimize interruptions of the free flow of commerce growing out of labor disputes, employers and employees and their representatives, in any industry affecting commerce, shall—

(1) exert every reasonable effort to make and maintain agreements concerning rates of pay, hours, and working conditions, including provision for adequate notice of any proposed change in the terms of such agreements;

(2) whenever a dispute arises over the terms or application of a collective-bargaining

¹ So in original. No subsec. (b) has been enacted.