

that there have been a number of instances of breach of trust, corruption, disregard of the rights of individual employees, and other failures to observe high standards of responsibility and ethical conduct which require further and supplementary legislation that will afford necessary protection of the rights and interests of employees and the public generally as they relate to the activities of labor organizations, employers, labor relations consultants, and their officers and representatives.

**(c) Necessity to eliminate or prevent improper practices**

The Congress, therefore, further finds and declares that the enactment of this chapter is necessary to eliminate or prevent improper practices on the part of labor organizations, employers, labor relations consultants, and their officers and representatives which distort and defeat the policies of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, as amended [29 U.S.C. 141 et seq.], and the Railway Labor Act, as amended [45 U.S.C. 151 et seq.], and have the tendency or necessary effect of burdening or obstructing commerce by (1) impairing the efficiency, safety, or operation of the instrumentalities of commerce; (2) occurring in the current of commerce; (3) materially affecting, restraining, or controlling the flow of raw materials or manufactured or processed goods into or from the channels of commerce, or the prices of such materials or goods in commerce; or (4) causing diminution of employment and wages in such volume as substantially to impair or disrupt the market for goods flowing into or from the channels of commerce.

(Pub. L. 86-257, § 2, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 519.)

**Editorial Notes**

**REFERENCES IN TEXT**

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (c), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 86-257, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 519, known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, which enacted this chapter, amended sections 153, 158, 159, 160, 164, 186, and 187 of this title, and enacted provisions set out as notes under sections 153, 158, and 481 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out below and Tables.

The Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, referred to in subsec. (c), is act June 23, 1947, ch. 120, 61 Stat. 136, which is classified principally to chapter 7 (§141 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 141 of this title and Tables.

The Railway Labor Act, referred to in subsec. (c), is act May 20, 1926, ch. 347, 44 Stat. 577, which is classified principally to chapter 8 (§151 et seq.) of Title 45, Railroads. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 151 of Title 45 and Tables.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

**SHORT TITLE**

Pub. L. 86-257, § 1, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 519, provided that: “This Act [enacting this chapter, amending sections 153, 158, 159, 160, 164, 186, and 187 of this title, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 153, 158, and 481 of this title] may be cited as the ‘Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959’.”

**§ 402. Definitions**

For the purposes of this chapter—

(a) “Commerce” means trade, traffic, commerce, transportation, transmission, or communication among the several States or between any State and any place outside thereof.

(b) “State” includes any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, Wake Island, the Canal Zone, and Outer Continental Shelf lands defined in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act [43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.].

(c) “Industry affecting commerce” means any activity, business, or industry in commerce or in which a labor dispute would hinder or obstruct commerce or the free flow of commerce and includes any activity or industry “affecting commerce” within the meaning of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, as amended [29 U.S.C. 141 et seq.], or the Railway Labor Act, as amended [45 U.S.C. 151 et seq.].

(d) “Person” includes one or more individuals, labor organizations, partnerships, associations, corporations, legal representatives, mutual companies, joint-stock companies, trusts, unincorporated organizations, trustees, trustees in cases under title 11, or receivers.

(e) “Employer” means any employer or any group or association of employers engaged in an industry affecting commerce (1) which is, with respect to employees engaged in an industry affecting commerce, an employer within the meaning of any law of the United States relating to the employment of any employees or (2) which may deal with any labor organization concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work, and includes any person acting directly or indirectly as an employer or as an agent of an employer in relation to an employee but does not include the United States or any corporation wholly owned by the Government of the United States or any State or political subdivision thereof.

(f) “Employee” means any individual employed by an employer, and includes any individual whose work has ceased as a consequence of, or in connection with, any current labor dispute or because of any unfair labor practice or because of exclusion or expulsion from a labor organization in any manner or for any reason inconsistent with the requirements of this chapter.

(g) “Labor dispute” includes any controversy concerning terms, tenure, or conditions of employment, or concerning the association or representation of persons in negotiating, fixing, maintaining, changing, or seeking to arrange terms or conditions of employment, regardless of whether the disputants stand in the proximate relation of employer and employee.

(h) “Trusteeship” means any receivership, trusteeship, or other method of supervision or control whereby a labor organization suspends the autonomy otherwise available to a subordinate body under its constitution or bylaws.

(i) “Labor organization” means a labor organization engaged in an industry affecting commerce and includes any organization of any kind, any agency, or employee representation committee, group, association, or plan so engaged in which employees participate and which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of

dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours, or other terms or conditions of employment, and any conference, general committee, joint or system board, or joint council so engaged which is subordinate to a national or international labor organization, other than a State or local central body.

(j) A labor organization shall be deemed to be engaged in an industry affecting commerce if it—

(1) is the certified representative of employees under the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act, as amended [29 U.S.C. 151 et seq.], or the Railway Labor Act, as amended [45 U.S.C. 151 et seq.]; or

(2) although not certified, is a national or international labor organization or a local labor organization recognized or acting as the representative of employees of an employer or employers engaged in an industry affecting commerce; or

(3) has chartered a local labor organization or subsidiary body which is representing or actively seeking to represent employees of employers within the meaning of paragraph (1) or (2); or

(4) has been chartered by a labor organization representing or actively seeking to represent employees within the meaning of paragraph (1) or (2) as the local or subordinate body through which such employees may enjoy membership or become affiliated with such labor organization; or

(5) is a conference, general committee, joint or system board, or joint council, subordinate to a national or international labor organization, which includes a labor organization engaged in an industry affecting commerce within the meaning of any of the preceding paragraphs of this subsection, other than a State or local central body.

(k) “Secret ballot” means the expression by ballot, voting machine, or otherwise, but in no event by proxy, of a choice with respect to any election or vote taken upon any matter, which is cast in such a manner that the person expressing such choice cannot be identified with the choice expressed.

(l) “Trust in which a labor organization is interested” means a trust or other fund or organization (1) which was created or established by a labor organization, or one or more of the trustees or one or more members of the governing body of which is selected or appointed by a labor organization, and (2) a primary purpose of which is to provide benefits for the members of such labor organization or their beneficiaries.

(m) “Labor relations consultant” means any person who, for compensation, advises or represents an employer, employer organization, or labor organization concerning employee organizing, concerted activities, or collective bargaining activities.

(n) “Officer” means any constitutional officer, any person authorized to perform the functions of president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, or other executive functions of a labor organization, and any member of its executive board or similar governing body.

(o) “Member” or “member in good standing”, when used in reference to a labor organization,

includes any person who has fulfilled the requirements for membership in such organization, and who neither has voluntarily withdrawn from membership nor has been expelled or suspended from membership after appropriate proceedings consistent with lawful provisions of the constitution and bylaws of such organization.

(p) “Secretary” means the Secretary of Labor.

(q) “Officer, agent, shop steward, or other representative”, when used with respect to a labor organization, includes elected officials and key administrative personnel, whether elected or appointed (such as business agents, heads of departments or major units, and organizers who exercise substantial independent authority), but does not include salaried nonsupervisory professional staff, stenographic, and service personnel.

(r) “District court of the United States” means a United States district court and a United States court of any place subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.

(Pub. L. 86-257, §3, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 520; Pub. L. 95-598, title III, §320, Nov. 6, 1978, 92 Stat. 2678.)

### Editorial Notes

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in the opening phrase, was in the original “titles I, II, III, IV, V (except section 505), and VI of this Act”, which reference includes those sections of the Act which are classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of such titles to the Code, see Tables.

For definition of Canal Zone, referred to in subsec. (b), see section 3602(b) of Title 22, Foreign Relations and Intercourse.

The Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, referred to in subsec. (b), is act Aug. 7, 1953, ch. 345, 67 Stat. 462, which is classified generally to subchapter III (§1331 et seq.) of chapter 29 of Title 43, Public Lands. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1301 of Title 43 and Tables.

The Labor Management Relations Act, 1947, referred to in subsec. (c), is act June 23, 1947, ch. 120, 61 Stat. 136, which is classified principally to chapter 7 (§141 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 141 of this title and Tables.

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (f), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 86-257, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 519, known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, which enacted this chapter, amended sections 153, 158, 159, 160, 164, 186, and 187 of this title, and enacted provisions set out as notes under sections 153, 158, and 481 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 401 of this title and Tables.

The Railway Labor Act, referred to in subsecs. (c) and (j)(1), is act May 20, 1926, ch. 347, 44 Stat. 577, which is classified principally to chapter 8 (§151 et seq.) of Title 45, Railroads. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 151 of Title 45 and Tables.

The National Labor Relations Act, referred to in subsec. (j)(1), is act July 5, 1935, ch. 372, 49 Stat. 452, which is classified generally to subchapter II (§151 et seq.) of chapter 7 of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see section 167 of this title and Tables.

#### AMENDMENTS

1978—Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 95-598 substituted “cases under title 11” for “bankruptcy”.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries****EFFECTIVE DATE OF 1978 AMENDMENT**

Amendment by Pub. L. 95-598 effective Oct. 1, 1979, see section 402(a) of Pub. L. 95-598, set out as an Effective Date note preceding section 101 of Title 11, Bankruptcy.

**SUBCHAPTER II—BILL OF RIGHTS OF MEMBERS OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS**

**§ 411. Bill of rights; constitution and bylaws of labor organizations**

**(a)(1) Equal rights**

Every member of a labor organization shall have equal rights and privileges within such organization to nominate candidates, to vote in elections or referendums of the labor organization, to attend membership meetings, and to participate in the deliberations and voting upon the business of such meetings, subject to reasonable rules and regulations in such organization's constitution and bylaws.

**(2) Freedom of speech and assembly**

Every member of any labor organization shall have the right to meet and assemble freely with other members; and to express any views, arguments, or opinions; and to express at meetings of the labor organization his views, upon candidates in an election of the labor organization or upon any business properly before the meeting, subject to the organization's established and reasonable rules pertaining to the conduct of meetings: *Provided*, That nothing herein shall be construed to impair the right of a labor organization to adopt and enforce reasonable rules as to the responsibility of every member toward the organization as an institution and to his refraining from conduct that would interfere with its performance of its legal or contractual obligations.

**(3) Dues, initiation fees, and assessments**

Except in the case of a federation of national or international labor organizations, the rates of dues and initiation fees payable by members of any labor organization in effect on September 14, 1959 shall not be increased, and no general or special assessment shall be levied upon such members, except—

(A) in the case of a local labor organization, (i) by majority vote by secret ballot of the members in good standing voting at a general or special membership meeting, after reasonable notice of the intention to vote upon such question, or (ii) by majority vote of the members in good standing voting in a membership referendum conducted by secret ballot; or

(B) in the case of a labor organization, other than a local labor organization or a federation of national or international labor organizations, (i) by majority vote of the delegates voting at a regular convention, or at a special convention of such labor organization held upon not less than thirty days' written notice to the principal office of each local or constituent labor organization entitled to such notice, or (ii) by majority vote of the members in good standing of such labor organization voting in a membership referendum conducted by secret ballot, or (iii) by majority vote of

the members of the executive board or similar governing body of such labor organization, pursuant to express authority contained in the constitution and bylaws of such labor organization: *Provided*, That such action on the part of the executive board or similar governing body shall be effective only until the next regular convention of such labor organization.

**(4) Protection of the right to sue**

No labor organization shall limit the right of any member thereof to institute an action in any court, or in a proceeding before any administrative agency, irrespective of whether or not the labor organization or its officers are named as defendants or respondents in such action or proceeding, or the right of any member of a labor organization to appear as a witness in any judicial, administrative, or legislative proceeding, or to petition any legislature or to communicate with any legislator: *Provided*, That any such member may be required to exhaust reasonable hearing procedures (but not to exceed a four-month lapse of time) within such organization, before instituting legal or administrative proceedings against such organizations or any officer thereof: *And provided further*, That no interested employer or employer association shall directly or indirectly finance, encourage, or participate in, except as a party, any such action, proceeding, appearance, or petition.

**(5) Safeguards against improper disciplinary action**

No member of any labor organization may be fined, suspended, expelled, or otherwise disciplined except for nonpayment of dues by such organization or by any officer thereof unless such member has been (A) served with written specific charges; (B) given a reasonable time to prepare his defense; (C) afforded a full and fair hearing.

**(b) Invalidity of constitution and bylaws**

Any provision of the constitution and bylaws of any labor organization which is inconsistent with the provisions of this section shall be of no force or effect.

(Pub. L. 86-257, title I, §101, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 522.)

**§ 412. Civil action for infringement of rights; jurisdiction**

Any person whose rights secured by the provisions of this subchapter have been infringed by any violation of this subchapter may bring a civil action in a district court of the United States for such relief (including injunctions) as may be appropriate. Any such action against a labor organization shall be brought in the district court of the United States for the district where the alleged violation occurred, or where the principal office of such labor organization is located.

(Pub. L. 86-257, title I, §102, Sept. 14, 1959, 73 Stat. 523.)

**§ 413. Retention of existing rights of members**

Nothing contained in this subchapter shall limit the rights and remedies of any member of