



FLRA NEWS

FEDERAL LABOR RELATIONS AUTHORITY - WASHINGTON, DC 20424

Contact: Gina K. Grippando
202-218-7776

www.flra.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 20, 2017

FOREIGN SERVICE LABOR RELATIONS BOARD ISSUES FIRST EVER GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY OR GUIDANCE ON UNION-DUES-WITHHOLDING ISSUE

The Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) announced that the Foreign Service Labor Relations Board (FSLRB) issued a decision in *American Foreign Service Association and U.S. Department of State*, Case No. FS-PS-0002.

This is the first ever FSLRB case involving a request for a “general statement of policy or guidance” under the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 U.S.C. §§ 4101-4118](#) and 22 C.F.R. § 1427.2. Specifically, the American Foreign Service Association asked the FSLRB to determine whether § 1018(b)(2) of the Foreign Service Act, 22 U.S.C. § 4118(b)(2), requires the Department of State to terminate an employee’s authorization to withhold union dues from his or her paycheck when the employee retires.

The FSLRB found that “when a foreign service employee retires, that ‘individual ceases to receive a salary’” from the Department of State. Therefore, the FSLRB determined that, “under § 1018(b)(2), the Agency must terminate the individual’s previous dues withholding assignment” upon retirement. However, the FSLRB “believes . . . that management should facilitate the employee’s option to continue the automatic deduction of dues after the transition from active duty to retirement, if the employee so desires.”

The FSLRB’s decision – and all of its decisions – can be found on the FLRA’s website at [this link](#).

Created under the [Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 U.S.C. §§ 4101-4118](#), the FSLRB administers the labor-management relations program for Foreign Service employees working for the Broadcasting Board of Governors, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Commerce. The FLRA Chairman serves as the Chairperson of the FSLRB and appoints the other two Members with input from the Foreign Service community. The FLRA’s General Counsel serves as the FSLRB’s General Counsel, and FLRA staff supports the FSLRB.

The FLRA administers the labor-management relations program for 2.1 million non-Postal federal employees worldwide, approximately 1.2 million of whom are represented in 2,200 bargaining units. It is charged with providing leadership in establishing policies and guidance related to federal sector labor-management relations and with resolving disputes under, and ensuring compliance with, the Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute.

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