

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

February 24, 2025

Mr. William B. Cowen  
Acting General Counsel  
National Labor Relations Board  
1015 Half Street SE  
Washington, D.C. 20570-0001

Dear Mr. Cowen,

I write with deep concern about the potential closure of the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) local office in Buffalo, NY that serves Region 3 of NLRB. Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) have listed on their website the termination of NLRB's lease of an office space in Buffalo. However, the NLRB staff in Buffalo have received conflicting information and no clarity from you as to what this means for where they will actually do their jobs going forward in serving and supporting workers across Upstate NY. Compounding the chaos, this potential office closure comes after the unprecedented and illegal firing of NLRB Member Gwynne Wilcox and the negative impact this will have on working people across New York and the country. I want answers on your plans for the NLRB presence in Buffalo and its service to workers across Upstate NY, and request that the NLRB keep an office open in Buffalo to support the region's workers.

The NLRB was created by Congress nearly 90 years ago as an independent, non-partisan federal agency to protect workers nationwide by enforcing the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees the rights of workers to join together in collective action, including by organizing unions, negotiating contracts, and going on strike. The NLRB has been essential to allowing workers to come together collectively to improve their pay and working conditions, and to address unfair labor practices. NLRB field offices like the one located in Buffalo play an integral role in this work, serving as the front line and front door for workers to receive assistance from the NLRB in protecting their rights under the law. This includes helping workers understand their workplace rights, file charges if they believe their rights have been violated, and file petitions for forming or joining a union. The NLRB is already facing significant understaffing of its field offices, and further cuts to staff as well as closure of locations undermine workers' rights. Further, historically the NLRB General Counsel has invited public comments on proposals to close or restructure Regional offices to allow the NLRB to fully and thoroughly consider the impact such closures or restructuring may have on internal and external stakeholders. In this case, the public was not notified of any decision, let alone invited to comment on a proposal.

Your plans for the future of the NLRB Buffalo office remain unclear. On one hand, Elon Musk and DOGE are claiming on their website a cost savings by ending the lease for NLRB's office in Buffalo. On the other hand, a spokesperson for NLRB said at the end of last week that the agency could not confirm whether the lease was being canceled and whether there would still be a Buffalo office. We have also heard from the NLRB's staff union in Buffalo that the Buffalo workers may move into a smaller office in the same building as their current office, following

through on a plan initiated during the Biden Administration, which would mean Musk and DOGE are taking credit for something the Biden Administration actually did. Your field office staff and the hardworking New Yorkers they serve deserve clarity and certainty.

In an effort to cut through this chaos and get answers for New York's workers, I seek answers on the following:

1. Will the current office lease in Buffalo for NLRB Region 3 continue?
2. If the current office lease is terminated, will a new lease be negotiated for NLRB Region 3 to continue to have a presence in Buffalo?
3. Who is making the decisions on this lease, what are the factors being considered, and what involvement does DOGE have in that process?
4. How will this decision affect the processing time for unfair labor practice charges and representation petitions in the region? Please detail your plans to ensure continued access to NLRB services in Western New York.
5. How are you evaluating staffing levels in Buffalo and across all NLRB regions to ensure workers have adequate access to the support and resources necessary to uphold their rights under the NLRA?

Upstate New York's workers and their rights under the law rely on the critical work of the NLRB, including its field offices. You should know that better than anyone. I ask for your prompt answers to my questions above and urge you to maintain the NLRB office in Buffalo and adequately staff it to support and serve Upstate New York's workers.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator