



# UNION MEMBER'S BILL OF RIGHTS

**The Union Member's Bill of Rights, Title I of the LMRDA, guarantees the following democratic rights to all union members:**

**Union members have equal rights and privileges to:**

- nominate candidates;
- vote in elections or referendums;
- attend, participate, and vote in union meetings;
- have secret ballot votes on rates of dues, initiation fees, and assessments;

These rights are subject to reasonable rules in the union constitution and/or bylaws.

**Free speech, including the right to:**

- criticize union officials;
- express viewpoints at union meetings (subject to reasonable rules of conduct);
- distribute literature;
- hold separate meetings without interference from union officials;

**Due process is required in internal union disciplinary hearings, including:**

- the right to specific, written charges;
- the right to confront and cross-examine accusers;
- adequate time to prepare a defense;
- the right to a full and fair hearing and a decision based on the evidence.

**You may be disciplined for the following activities:**

- participating in wildcat strikes;
- advocating decertification of the union;
- nonpayment of dues;
- crossing picket lines;
- other acts which interfere with the union's legal obligations or threaten its existence.

**Access to information:**

- The union must send you a copy of your collective bargaining agreement (union contract) including supplements and possible hiring hall rules if you request it.
- Your union must let you inspect other members' contracts at the union office.
- Most unions must send financial reports to the Department of Labor ("OLMS")
- For good cause you may inspect your union's financial documents.

**No retaliation:**

- The union may not retaliate against you for exercising your protected rights.
- The union may not retaliate against you for suing the union to enforce these rights.
- Your employer may not retaliate against you for exercising your rights within your union.

## HOW TO ENFORCE THESE RIGHTS

In most cases, you must exhaust internal union procedures before you can sue. The internal procedures are described in the Union's constitution and/or bylaws. If you do not agree with the result, or if the process takes more than four months, you may file a lawsuit in federal district court for injunctive relief, restoration of your rights and money damages. You must hire your own attorney to represent you in a lawsuit. If you are denied a copy of your contract, you may file a complaint with the Department of Labor which will investigate and has authority to bring a lawsuit on your behalf.



Learn more about the Association for Union Democracy (AUD) and how AUD can help you assert your rights at [uniondemocracy.org](http://uniondemocracy.org)  
[info@uniondemocracy.org](mailto:info@uniondemocracy.org)

Nothing on this flyer should be construed as legal advice. For advice regarding your specific situation, please speak with an attorney.

