

Updates to Unifor Constitution Article 18.B Guidance for Local Unions

September 2025



No Unifor review of grievance decisions

At the 2025 Constitutional Convention, delegates amended Article 18.B.1 of our Constitution. That change means that some kinds of decisions cannot be reviewed at the national level. They are decisions about a collective agreement, a grievance, or another workplace right or process.

The reasons for this change include that workplace representation decisions can be the subject of other kinds of challenge. As well, these reviews have been very time-consuming and deliver little benefit to our members and local unions.

Other decisions can still be reviewed under the Constitution. They are decisions about elections, and other decisions that affect the rights of Unifor members.

Local Unions can still have a review process for grievances

This change does not mean that Local Unions cannot have a process for reviewing decisions about grievances and other workplace rights and processes. A Local Union may keep in place an existing review mechanism. A Local Union may also make a new process. However, any Local Union review process for decisions about grievances and other workplace rights and processes cannot include a review step under Article 18.B of the Constitution. It cannot include a request for review by the Committee on Constitutional Matters, and it cannot include a final review by Unifor Public Review Board.

It is recommended that Local Unions have a review process

It is recommended that Local Unions should have a formal or informal process for reviewing decisions about grievances and other workplace rights and processes. That will help Local Unions avoid duty of fair representation complaints by members.

A formal process can be part of the Local Union's bylaws. It could also be in a separate policy. It should describe a process for the member to make a request. It should describe who makes the decision. A review process could also be informal. Any process should end with a written decision that explains the reasons for the decision.

A Local Union review process should be well-known to members

Whether it is formal or informal, members should know that a review process exists. For example, when an adverse decision is made about a grievance, the Local Union should tell the member about the review process. It can do that when it communicates the decision to the affected member.

Decisions about grievances should be made carefully

At all times, decisions about our representation of members should be made for good reasons. Every decision should be based on relevant considerations and not irrelevant considerations. When a decision is made that a member will not like, time should be taken to provide a written decision, and an explanation of the reasons for the decision.

Local Unions are reminded that the Unifor Education Department provides training about grievance and other workplace rights in a variety of formats, including Webinars, Online Education, Paid Education Leave courses, and Area School courses.

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