



# The American Foreign Service Association Files Lawsuit to Protect Collective Bargaining Rights

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**Washington, D.C.** – The American Foreign Service Association (AFSA (/)), represented by O’Donoghue & O’Donoghue and attorney Richard Hirn, today filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia challenging the Trump Administration’s executive order (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/fact-sheets/2025/03/fact-sheet-president-donald-j-trump-exempts-agencies-with-national-security-missions-from-federal-collective-bargaining-requirements/>) that strips collective bargaining rights from a majority of U.S. Foreign Service members.

Issued on March 27, the executive order cites national security concerns to justify dismantling labor rights that have been protected by law for decades. AFSA’s lawsuit asserts the order is legally indefensible and politically motivated retaliation against a union that has consistently defended the nonpartisan integrity of American diplomacy.

“Through war and peace, administrations of both parties have respected the Foreign Service’s right to collective bargaining,” said AFSA President Tom Yazdgerdi. “Let’s be clear: this isn’t about security. This administration is trying to punish us for defending the Foreign Service, for pushing back on reckless personnel policies, and for daring to speak out.”

AFSA's complaint charges that the executive order exceeds the president's legal authority, violates the separation of powers, and retaliates against protected speech—violating the First Amendment.

As the union and professional association for the U.S. Foreign Service, AFSA represents 18,000 active-duty and retired members across six foreign affairs agencies. The executive order strips rights from employees at the State Department and the now-dismantled U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—AFSA's largest constituencies.

"We are filing suit because Foreign Service professionals deserve the same rights they've had for generations—the right to representation, to a collective voice, and to serve their country without political interference," Yazdgerdi said. "This executive action is the single greatest threat to the Foreign Service—and to our union—in our 100-year history."

"The President has not offered any justification for terminating AFSA's collective bargaining rights on national security grounds. Instead, in the so-called 'fact sheet' the White House candidly admitted that the Executive Order was issued because certain federal unions were 'hostile' to him and had ostensibly 'declared war on President Trump's agenda,'" explained AFSA's outside counsel, Richard Hirn.

To read the filing, click here (</sites/default/files/case-1-25-cv-01030.pdf>).

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