

Amazon anti-union confabs deemed illegal by labor officials

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U.S. labor board prosecutors have determined that anti-union meetings held by Amazon.com Inc. in Staten Island, New York, violated federal law, according to an agency spokesperson.

The National Labor Relations Board's Brooklyn regional director will issue a complaint if the company doesn't settle, the agency's press secretary Kayla Blado said in an email. The regional official has determined that the company held illegal mandatory meetings and made illegal threats in those sessions, she said.

Amazon said it holds the meetings to ensure employees understand the facts about [unions](#) and elections, and that for decades companies have been allowed to do so. "These [allegations](#) are false and we look forward to showing that through the process," Kelly Nantel, an Amazon spokesperson, said in an email.

The upstart Amazon Labor Union last month decisively won an election to represent workers at an Amazon fulfillment center in Staten Island, the first time organized labor has gained a foothold at one of the e-commerce giant's U.S. facilities.

Amazon challenged the result, alleging the union broke election rules and that the NLRB violated its duty to be impartial by giving employees the appearance that the agency favored the union. Among its claims, Amazon said the union inappropriately tried "to interfere with and 'shut down'" meetings with workers.

During the election, Amazon held mandatory "information sessions," during which managers and consultants made the case that workers should vote to reject the union.

The practice is standard operating procedure for the company, which also held the meetings during union campaigns in Alabama and at a second Staten Island warehouse, where the ALU lost an election earlier this week.

"It's a bit rich for Amazon to complain about interrupting captive-

audience meetings" that are themselves "inherently coercive," the union's attorney Seth Goldstein said in an interview. "We hope that Amazon will agree to end this unlawful [union](#)-busting practice."

The NLRB [general counsel](#), Jennifer Abruzzo, said last month that she would seek to ban such meetings, declaring in a memo to the labor board's regional chiefs that they constituted an unlawful threat to employees. The Amazon case could offer a vehicle for Abruzzo, an appointee of President Joe Biden, to get the issue before [labor](#) board members in Washington, where Democrats hold a majority due to other Biden appointments.

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