

Amazon workers in bid to unionize at Alabama warehouse

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Workers at an Amazon warehouse in Alabama are seeking to form a union, setting up a potential battle in the Deep South with a company that has opposed unionization efforts.

Employees at the Bessemer facility filed a petition last month with the National Labor Relations Board saying they want to hold an election on forming a union to represent the 1,500 full and [part-time workers](#) at the so-called fulfillment center. It does not include drivers, seasonal employees, [professional employees](#) and others.

The employees are seeking to be represented by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union.

The National Labor Relations Board has scheduled a hearing on the matter for Dec. 18, spokesman Kevin Petroccione said.

Lawyers representing the employees did not immediately return emails seeking comment.

A website created in support of forming a union in the Alabama facility urged workers to join for better pay, grievance procedures and working conditions, including [safety standards](#).

"We face outrageous work quotas that have left many with illnesses and lifetime injuries," the site reads. The site takes the familiar swoosh on the Amazon logo and turns it upside down to look like a frown.

Amazon has said that since the warehouse opened in March it has created thousands of full-time jobs in Bessemer, with average pay of \$15.30 per hour, including full healthcare, vision and dental insurance.

"We respect our employees' right to join or not join a [labor union](#) but we don't believe this group represents the majority of our employees' views," spokeswoman Heather Knox wrote in an emailed statement. "Our employees choose to work at Amazon because we offer some of the best jobs available everywhere we hire, and we encourage anyone to compare our overall pay, benefits, and workplace environment to any other."

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont last month tweeted his support for the Alabama workers.

"If Amazon workers in Alabama—a strong anti-union state—vote to form a union, it will be a shot heard around the world," Sanders tweeted. "If they can negotiate [higher wages](#) and better working conditions in the South, it will benefit every worker in America."

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