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National Labor Relations Board to hear complaint against Freightliner, UAW

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An unfair labor practice complaint against Freightliner will go before a judge next month, officials announced Wednesday. A regional director with the National Labor Relations Board filed a formal complaint against the Daimler-Chrysler subsidiary for withholding pay raises at a Gaffney facility in an effort to coerce employees into unionizing. The NLRB complaint will be heard Nov. 15 before an administrative law judge. The complaint alleges that company officials postponed scheduled pay increases to convince employees to select the United Auto Workers union as their workplace representative. The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, which made Wednesday's announcement, said that 70 percent of the plant's employees rejected union affiliation. But the UAW and Freightliner continued to enforce an agreement that included terms and conditions of employment through a "neutrality agreement." "Freightliner and UAW officials cut a backroom deal to corral workers into union affiliation against their wishes by holding their wage increase hostage," said Stefan Gleason, vice president at the foundation. "While an overwhelming majority of workers simply don't want the union around, Freightliner and the UAW union are refusing to get the message." Chris Brandt, Freightliner spokesman in Oregon, was out of town and couldn't be reached for comment. The foundation is battling the traditional use of such agreements because employees are often forced to publicly state their position using a card check authorization instead of a secret ballot election. The foundation also helped two Freightliner employees, David Roach and Mike Ivey, file a second unfair labor practice charge against the company. They accuse the UAW and Freightliner of engaging in unlawful premature bargaining. Chris Winston can be reached at 562-7267 or chris.winston@shj.com.
