



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on May 11, 2011

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## Rand Paul: Does White House Have an Enemies List?

A group of GOP congressmen are appealing to President Obama to oppose a complaint filed by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) against Seattle-based aerospace and defense giant, Boeing, Inc.

The cause of the lawmakers' ire is the [complaint](#) filed against Boeing wherein the NLRB alleges that the company struck back at union workers employed at its facility in Washington by locating the newest factory in a state with a right-to-work employment system — South Carolina.



The South Carolina plant, located in North Charleston, is the second production line of the company's much-hyped Boeing 787 Dreamliner jet.

The complaint itself was filed by NLRB Acting General Counsel Lafe Solomon after investigating charges leveled against the company by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers union District 751 regarding Boeing's negotiating tactics during labor disputes.

A news release sent by Solomon's office declared:

A worker's right to strike is a fundamental right guaranteed by the National Labor Relations Act. We also recognize the rights of employers to make business decisions based on their economic interests, but they must do so within the law. I have worked with the parties to encourage settlement in the hope of avoiding costly litigation, and my door remains open to that possibility.

The NLRB reported that it had "found reasonable cause to believe that Boeing had violated two sections of the National Labor Relations Act because its statements were coercive to employees and its actions were motivated by a desire to retaliate for past strikes and chill future strike activity."

The business lobby has responded to the complaint with a vigorous defense of Boeing and its practices. Predictably, Republicans in Congress have also flown to the defense of Boeing, insisting that if the NLRB's action against Boeing is successful, South Carolina (and by extension several right-to-work states across Dixie) will lose jobs now and in the future, as corporations will avoid incurring the wrath of the administration and the NLRB.

Given the substantial size of the GOP voting bloc in the south, it is little wonder that the NLRB versus Boeing battle has been endowed by Republican 2012 presidential hopefuls with wider significance. The dispute has been enlarged and adopted by many of them as evidence of the Obama administration's vendetta against all business: small, medium, and large. This sort of scrum is perfect for gaining ground in the battle for the GOP nomination, particularly in light of the early primary to be held in South Carolina.

The essence of the Republican opposition was [reported](#) by *The Hill*:



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Speaking at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley (R) and several GOP lawmakers — such as Sens. Lamar Alexander (Tenn.), Jim DeMint (S.C.), Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and Rand Paul (Ky.) and Rep. Joe Wilson (S.C.) — took turns criticizing the Obama administration for the complaint.

“This is an issue that may have started in South Carolina, but we want to make sure it never touches another state,” Haley said. “We are demanding that the president respond to what the NLRB has done. This goes against everything we know our American economy to be.”

To demonstrate his colleagues’ earnest determination to thwart the NLRB and the president, Tennessee’s Lamar Alexander plans to introduce a measure in the Senate that will protect employment statutes in right-to-work states the administration considers hostile to labor.

Additionally, a letter was sent by 19 Republican Senators to President Obama encouraging him not to remove the “acting” designation from Lafe Solomon’s current job title. The lawmakers’ missive mentioned Craig Becker as well, who has been nominated to take a seat on the NLRB board.

Becker attracted the attention of the letter writers because of the strength of his ties to organized labor. Becker was formerly employed as associate general counsel to both the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the AFL-CIO. Last year he was recess-appointed to the board after his nomination was defeated in the Senate.

Senator Graham was quoted in an article in *The Hill* regarding the future of a Solomon nomination hearing in the Senate: “[Obama] can remove Mr. Solomon, who will never see the light of day in the Senate,” Graham said.

For his part, Senator Rand Paul detected a more sinister agenda in the White House’s support of the NLRB and its complaint against Boeing. The first-term Senator from Kentucky wondered aloud if the President didn’t have an “enemies list” and whether business, states’ rights, Republican legislators, and the very concept of “right-to-work” weren’t included on that list. Said Paul:

Mr. President, do you have an enemies list? Is this decision based on the fact that South Carolina appears to be a Republican state, has two Republican senators? Is this decision based on the fact that South Carolina is a right-to-work state? Are they on your enemies list?”

In a discussion last year about the existence of an Obama “enemies list,” an [article](#) published on a Fox News blog hypothesized that:

A foe who represents a potential rival or is attacking on an issue that looks bad for the president may be brushed off, while the criticism of one the administration thinks a more attractive target gets both barrels from Team Obama.

The target is one who in which excites great anger among the president’s liberal base.

The piece cited former Vice President Dick Cheney, Karl Rove, Sarah Palin, Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-Ohio), and GOP strategist Ed Gillespie as likely entries on the rumored roster of White House foes.

Regardless of whether there exists such a notorious enumeration, labor advocates have not let the issue of the Boeing complaint and the construction of a factory in management-friendly South Carolina pass without turning their sights on big business.

Kimberly Freeman Brown, executive director for American Rights at Work, took her turn aggrandizing



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the implications of the complaint, insisting that she and her fellows were standing up for the rights of all working men and women. In a statement, she wrote:

The complaint itself follows the agency's thorough investigation of Boeing's attempt to avoid workers having a voice on the job at its Washington state facility. That's hardly a radical departure from the NLRB's mandate, and it's certainly not an attack on the economy, states' rights or even so-called 'right-to-work' laws.

The Hill quoted Senator Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, who said that the GOP was conducting a mission of "misinformation." Harkin declared:

This overly dramatic response and the disturbing misinformation they are peddling has needlessly complicated the legal process and distorted the public discussion of this case. Unions are one of the few voices left in our society speaking up for the little guy, and if we let powerful CEOs trample all over these rights without consequences, we might as well give up on having a middle class altogether.

Solomon issued a [statement](#) Monday defending the complaint and averring that the process was initiated only after a long investigation revealed that labor relation decisions made by Boeing were "discriminatory under our statute."

On June 14, an administrative law judge sitting in Seattle will hear arguments in the case.

*Photo: Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) right, talks with Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) in a hall on Capitol Hill in Washington, April 13, 2011: AP Images*



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