

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 30, 2024

Jennfier A. Abruzzo
General Counsel
National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)
1015 Half Street SE
Washington, D.C. 20570

Dear General Counsel Abruzzo:

As Members of Congress who represent Google workers and other technology workers across the country, we write to express our serious concern regarding alleged retaliation and other coercive actions taken against YouTube Music workers by Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corporation and Google, LLC. We urge you to swiftly and thoroughly investigate these charges.

On Oct. 21, 2022, a majority of the 58 YouTube Music workers working for Cognizant and Google filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) seeking to unionize. Just three weeks later, Cognizant and Google announced a policy requiring workers to begin working in-person from the Austin office beginning on Feb. 6, 2023. According to workers, this action alone made employment impossible for YouTube Music workers who did not live in Austin and resulted in an immediate reduction in the bargaining unit by 20%. As a result, the workers filed Unfair Labor Practice (ULP) Case # 16-CA-310918.¹

Then, on Thursday, Feb. 29, 2024, Cognizant and Google suddenly and unexpectedly terminated the employment of all YouTube Music workers (ULP Case #16-CA-337641). The firing came after employees went on strike, and employees were informed of their termination while testifying in front of the Austin City Council.²

This is not the first time that Google workers have been fired after attempting to organize their workplace. After Google Content Creation Operations workers took steps to unionize their workplace in June of 2023, Google fired 80 members of the 119 member team.³

Between January 24, 2023 and March 8, 2024, Alphabet Workers Union-Communication Workers of America (AWU-CWA) filed twelve total ULP charges with the NLRB, with workers alleging retaliation, coercive action, and refusals to bargain from Cognizant and Google as joint employers. AWU-CWA is still waiting on a ruling from the NLRB on the majority of these cases:

- 16-CA-337641⁴
- 16-CA-335911⁵
- 16-CA-330609⁶

¹ Cognizant; Google, LLC/Alphabet, Inc. (as joint employers), Case 16-CA-310918, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-310918>.

² *Austin American-Statesman*, "Youtube Music workers get fired while asking Austin City Council for Google negotiation resolution," March 1, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZBtjNGes6s>; Lina Fisher, "YouTube Music Workers Laid Off in Possible Retaliation for Organizing," *The Austin Chronicle*, March 8, 2024, <https://www.austinchronicle.com/news/2024-03-08/youtube-music-workers-laid-off-in-possible-retaliation-for-organizing/>; Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp., and Google, LLC, as joint employers, Case 16-CA-337641, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-337641>.

³ Brandon Vigliarolo, "Google Bard AI contractors unionize amid anger over 'retaliatory' layoffs," *The Register*, November 8, 2023, https://www.theregister.com/2023/11/08/google_union_nlr/.

⁴ Case 16-CA-337641, National Labor Relations Board.

⁵ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, as joint employers, Case 16-CA-335911, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-335911>.

⁶ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, joint employers, Case 16-CA-330609, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-330609>.

- 16-CA-330628⁷
- 16-CA-330658⁸
- 16-CA-330614⁹
- 16-CA-330594¹⁰
- 16-CA-326649¹¹
- 16-CA-326027¹²
- 16-CA-320223¹³
- 16-CA-317404¹⁴
- 16-CA-310918¹⁵

On January 3, 2024, the NLRB appropriately recognized that Google shares in determining the essential terms and conditions of these workers' employment, meaning that Google's refusal to bargain with these unionized YouTube Music contractors is illegal, as intended by the National Labor Relations Act.¹⁶ This was lauded as a win for the YouTube Music workers in Austin and for lower-paid technology workers across America.

However, after that ruling, Google has repeated that contracted companies such as Cognizant are "responsible for these workers' employment terms," seemingly ignoring their responsibility as a joint employer.¹⁷

Employees at Cognizant, Google, and other companies across the United States must be protected from unfair retaliation for exercising their rights to organize. The NLRB's response to the termination of YouTube Music workers and alleged labor practice complaints may set important precedent for workers and companies across America. We support the NLRB's ongoing efforts to look into these ULP cases, and we urge your expeditious and thorough review of all cases still pending review. When workers lose their jobs during a union organizing drive, especially an organizing drive at companies as significant as Google, we have an urgent responsibility to ensure that workers' rights are fully protected.

⁷ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, joint employers, Case 16-CA-330628, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-330628>.

⁸ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, joint employers, Case 16-CA-330658, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-330658>.

⁹ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, joint employers, Case 16-CA-330614, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-330614>.

¹⁰ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, joint employers, Case 16-CA-330594, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-330594>.

¹¹ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, as joint employers, Case 16-CA-326649, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-326649>.

¹² Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, as joint employers, Case 16-CA-326027, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-326027>.

¹³ Cognizant; Google, LLC/Alphabet, Inc. (as joint employers), Case 16-CA-320223, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-320223>.

¹⁴ Cognizant; Google, LLC/Alphabet, Inc. (as joint employers), Case 16-CA-317404, National Labor Relations Board, <https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-317404>.

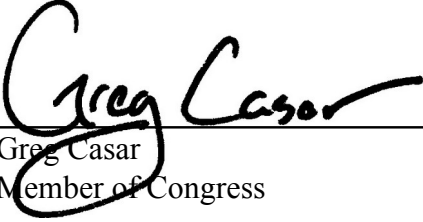
¹⁵ Case 16-CA-310918, National Labor Relations Board.

¹⁶ Cognizant Technology Solutions U.S. Corp. and Google, LLC, as joint employers, Case [16-CA-326027](https://www.nlr.gov/case/16-CA-326027), National Labor Relations Board, <https://apps.nlr.gov/link/document.aspx/09031d4583c083ab>.


¹⁷ Steve Knopper, "Mass Layoff of YouTube Music Contractors Who Unionized Opens Up Questions," *Billboard*, March 8, 2024, <https://www.billboard.com/business/business-news/youtube-music-layoffs-contractors-who-unionized-questions-accusations-1235627884/>.

Thank you for your ongoing work and attention to this critical issue.


Sincerely,




Greg Casar
Member of Congress



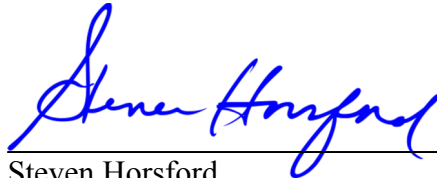
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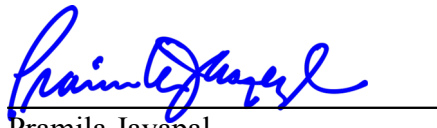
Steven Horsford
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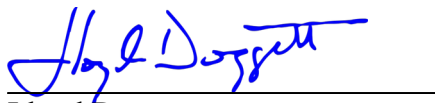
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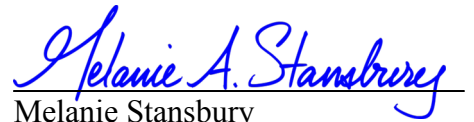
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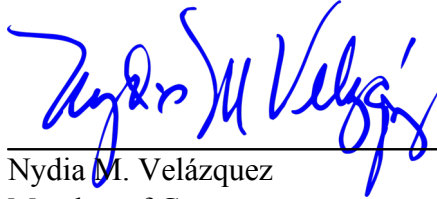
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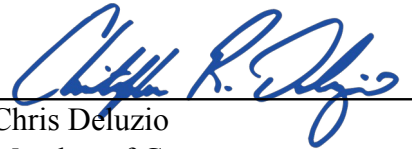
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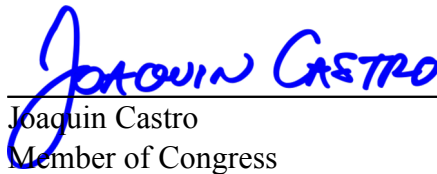
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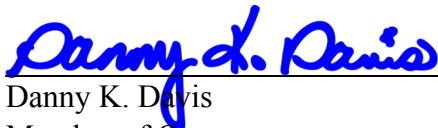
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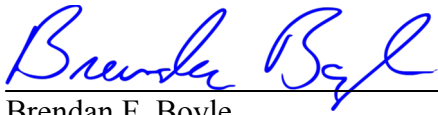
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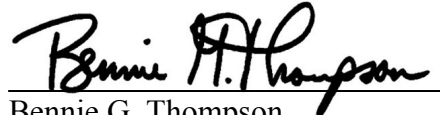
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