

# UNION SELECT \* FROM hackers;

Why We Should be Building InfoSec Worker Power Through  
the Labor Movement

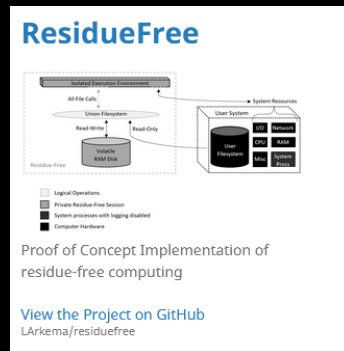
Logan Arkema (@LoganArkema)

Slides and Resources available at <https://larkema.github.com/Unions>

# \$whoami



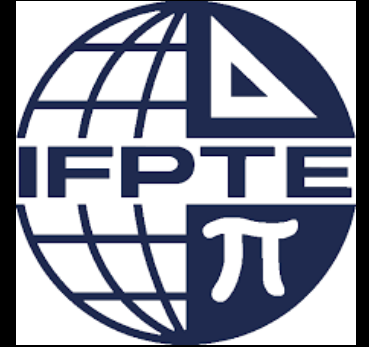
- “Sr. Cybersecurity Specialist” @ Gov Agency\*
  - Cloud Engineer / Product Lead
- Union Rep!
- Tool Developer – ResidueFree
- Volunteer @ DEF CON Policy, Hackers on the Hill, and BSides NoVA
- “Badge” Maker – DCTransistor
- Masters in Tech Law and Policy (I Am Not A Lawyer)



\*The opinions and views expressed in this presentation are my own and my union local's and do not necessarily represent the thoughts, opinions, or positions of my current employer.

# \$whoami --all-labor

- Union Rep for 5 Years w/ International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers
  - IT & Cybersecurity Team Rep
  - Bargaining, Dispute Resolution, Advocacy
- Tech Workers Coalition (TWC)
- Federal Unionist Network



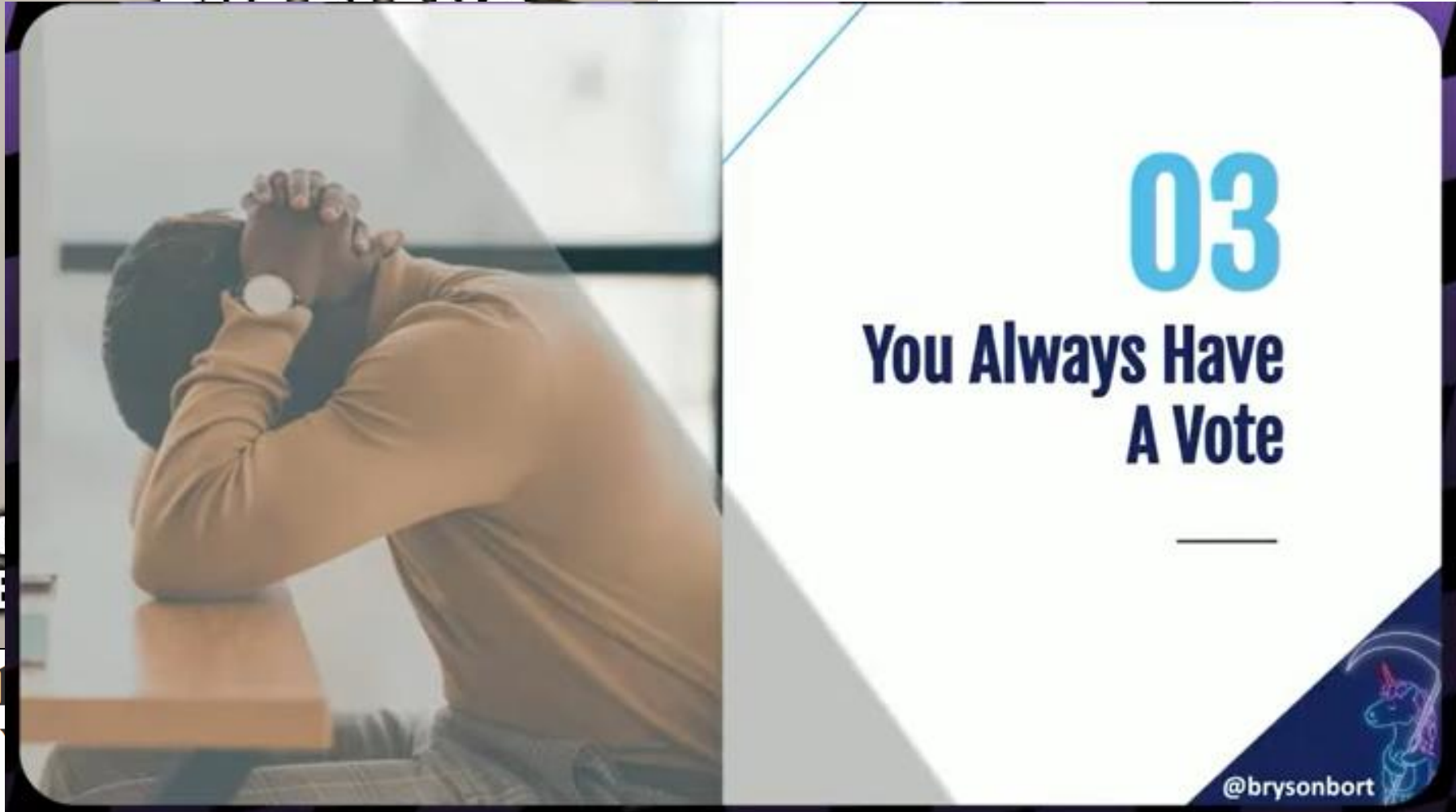
\$whoami



Some Guy

# The Current Moment™

# Remember The Plan?



GET THE C  
BECAUSE WE

Nearly 4 Mil  
Here's Why  
This Sector

By [Jack Kelly](#), Senior Contributor. © Jack Kelly covers career growth, job mar... [Follow Author](#)

Published Aug 16, 2024, 06:00am EDT

ors' 23 New



ersecurity  
000 job

National Cyber Director Harry Sokor Jr. unveiled the program as part of an effort to fill a continued gap in cyber, technology and AI positions.

Published Sept. 5, 2024

# So, Things Aren't Great



PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

## Addressing Risks from Chris Krebs and Government Censorship

Presidential Memoranda | April 9, 2025

## CISA cuts: 'Open season' for US?

By DANA NICKEL | 04/14/2025 10:00 AM EDT

## Trump administration dismisses members of all DHS advisory panels, including CSRB

CVE program gets last-minute funding from CISA – and maybe a new home

Uncertainty is the new certainty

[Jessica Lyons](#)

Wed 16 Apr 2025 // 16:54 UTC

## Trump fires 2 Democrats on the Federal Trade Commission, seeking more control over regulators

# Hey, That's Us!



PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

## EXCLUSIONS FROM FEDERAL LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS PROGRAMS

Executive Orders | March 27, 2025

## Federal agencies ordered to avoid cyber staff layoffs

March 14, 2025



1-419. The following agencies or subdivisions of each Executive department listed in section 101 of title 5, United States Code, the Social Security Administration, and the Office of Personnel Management:

- (a) Office of the Chief Information Officer.
- (b) any other agency or subdivision that has information resources management duties as the agency or subdivision's primary duty.



# And That's the Rest of Us!



## Layoffs.fyi

80,250 tech employees laid off · 171 tech companies w/ layoffs · In 2025 ▾

67,749 gov't employees laid off by DOGE · 178,296 total federal departures · In 2025

## 5 years into the remote work boom, the return-to-office push is stronger than ever —here's why

Published Sun, Mar 23 2025·9:00 AM EDT

## IBM Reportedly Walks Back Diversity Policies, Citing 'Inherent Tensions': Here Are All The Companies Rolling Back DEI Programs

## CrowdStrike announces 5% job cuts, says AI is 'reshaping every industry'

PUBLISHED WED, MAY 7 2025·4:03 PM EDT

## Pluralistic: The enshittification of tech jobs (27 Apr 2025)



Cory Doctorow

April 27, 2025

Uncategorized

ai, big tech, class struggle, class war, enshittification, i fight for the user, labor, monopoly, precariatization, proletarianization, tech, tech industry



**We Have The Values and  
Skills to Meet The Moment  
(And To Unionize)**

# We Can Self-Organize



**DISTRICT C-N** CYBER STATECRAFT INITIATIVE

## It Takes a Village:

**SPOTLIGHTING PRACTITIONER-DRIVEN CYBERSECURITY  
SUCCESES AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**



**OpenSSF**  
OPEN SOURCE SECURITY FOUNDATION



**CYBER  
RESILIENCE  
CORPS**  
USA



# We Can Advocate



I AM THE  
Cavalry

DAVID KRAVETS

SECURITY DEC 3, 2008 11:26 AM

## Hackers, Others Seek DMCA Exemptions



# We're Outspoken & Autonomous



**NSA director heckled as he pleads with hackers to 'put the facts on the table'**



Yes, I am a criminal. My crime is that of curiosity. My crime is that of judging people by what they say and think, not what they look like. My crime is that of outsmarting you, something that you will never forgive me for.

I am a hacker, and this is my manifesto. You may stop this individual, but you can't stop us all... after all, we're all alike.

# Back to Those Union Things

# Unions 101 (U.S. Private Sector)



(5) The term "labor organization" means any organization of any kind, or any agency or employee representation committee or plan, in which employees participate and which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of dealing with employers concerning grievances, labor disputes, wages, rates of pay, hours of employment, or conditions of work.

## RIGHTS OF EMPLOYEES

Sec. 7. [§ 157.] Employees shall have the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in **other concerted activities** for the purpose of collective bargaining **or other mutual aid or protection**, and shall also have the right to refrain from any or all of such activities except to the extent that such right may be affected by an agreement requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment as authorized in section 8(a)(3) [section 158(a)(3) of this title].

Excludes managers and independent contractors

# Unions 101 (U.S. Private Sector)



## Unions on the Job: A Village With Legal Power At Your Job

1. Majority of covered workers decide to form a union and elect leaders
2. Union bargains a contract for *all* covered workers
  1. Specific subset of employees;
  2. All employees at employer (“industry unions”); and/or
  3. All members under all covered employers (“craft unions”)
3. Union files grievances over contract and law violations; represents members in advocacy activities



# Unions 101 (U.S. Private Sector)



No union? No problem. We've got solidarity.

Activities with *one or more* (sometimes just one) employee to improve conditions for *any other* employee (at *any* employer) is legally protected without a formal union

For example:

- Talking about unions or wages
- Confronting your boss
- Refusing to work in unsafe or abusive conditions

File complaints over violations to the National Labor Relations Board

# Unions 101 (U.S. Public Sector)



## Key Differences:

- Forget that mutual aid stuff or striking
- But add whistleblower protections (including for managers)
- Less bargaining over pay and benefits – more Congressional advocacy (feds)
- President can (try to) exclude agencies and positions for “national security”
  - Sorry spooks ☹️
- State & local workers: differs by state

# Unions 101



14.3 Million Members = 14.3 Million Voters = Political Power



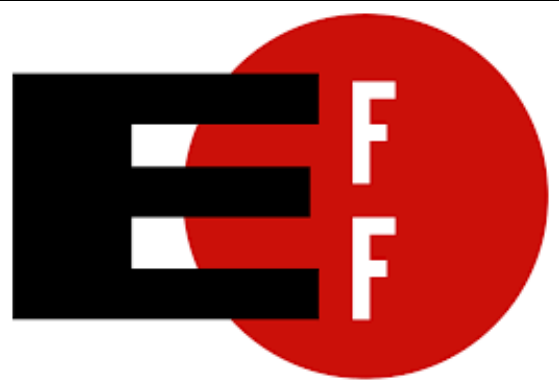
# Success Stories



**Our union strives to protect Alphabet workers, our users, and our world.**

We recognize our power as Alphabet workers—full-time employees, temporary employees, vendors, and contractors—comes from our solidarity with one another.

# Success Stories



## **EFF and IFPTE Local 20 Attain Labor Contract**

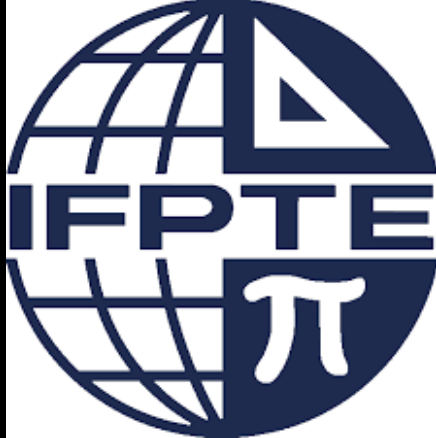
First-Ever, Three-Year Pact Protects Workers' Pay, Benefits, Working Conditions, and More

PRESS RELEASE | OCTOBER 16, 2024

- Organized to maintain good working conditions with a binding contract
- Won guaranteed remote work, commitment to DEI, transparent pay scales and raises, anti-bossware commitments, and rental assistance



# Success Stories



- Organized after unilateral, unpopular changes from agency head
- Won remote / flexible work (and fighting to hold onto it)
- Ensured effective and employee-centered AI deployments with in-house models
- Bargained over effective security control implementation

# Counter Arguments



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • “Labor law gets violated all the time!”                 | • They’re still your rights, and our power comes from being organized – not the law. |
| • “We’ll be outsourced or fired if we unionize!”          | • You’ll be outsourced anyways if it’s cheaper + illegal + protections               |
| • “Unions are corrupt and/or ineffective!”                | • Unions are democracies – they answer to you when you demand it                     |
| • “Union leaders don’t know technology and are luddites!” | • Unions can balance tech workers’ and impacted workers’ interests                   |
| • “Unions will take my dues for nothing!”                 | • A union contract pays for itself + money for new organizing and advocacy reinvests |
| • “Unions take my autonomy!”                              | • Unions stop your boss from taking your autonomy, and are a vehicle for yours       |

**It's On Us  
But Not Us Alone**



# It's On Us To Stop Shit



**DOGE Understands Something the US Policy Establishment Does Not: Technology is the Spinal Cord of Government**

EMILY TAVOULAREAS / FEB 18, 2025

We're the bones

We can either enable or slow the abuse of systems, but not alone

Our labor is essential to protect our boss' assets

Enshittification Blockers:

1. ~~Competition~~
2. ~~Regulation (?)~~
3. ~~Interoperability (?)~~
4. Workers

# It's On Us To Stop Shit



EXCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGY

## A whistleblower's disclosure details how DOGE may have taken sensitive labor data

APRIL 15, 2025 · 5:00 AM ET

**Your Rights > Your NDA**



r/fednews • 3 mo. ago  
Happy\_Place6537

## Whistleblowing in Federal IT: What I Did, Why It Matters, and How You Can Speak Up Safely

Hi FedNews,

I'm a federal IT specialist who, about two weeks ago, filed a formal disclosure with Congress about a potential major security incident inside my agency and asked for an investigation. I'm posting to remind every public servant that speaking up matters and you're not alone. You should feel empowered. Transparency is key.

# And We've Got Friends



## Federal Workers Launch New Lawsuit to Fight DOGE's Data Access

The Electronic Frontier Foundation filed the complaint on behalf of US federal workers, arguing that DOGE's data access is illegal and should be cut off.

## US Unions Take on Artificial Intelligence

BY  
ALEX N. PRESS

The labor movement has a special responsibility to confront artificial intelligence's imposition on workers: without unions, bosses have carte blanche to use AI to undercut workers at every level.

## Nurses Demand Safety Precautions Amidst Ascension Ransomware Crisis

In Cybersecurity Thu, 30 May 2024



# For Managers



- Let your employees unionize!
  - You'll get less turnover, more psychological safety (with better ideas), honest feedback, and fewer insider threats
  - Then bargain in good faith!
- Proactively solicit input (and materially respond to it)
- Support other unions in private and public
- Join and support other civil society organizations
- Increase labor market competition (be a good employer)

# Resources



- Tech Workers Coalition: <https://techworkerscoalition.org/subscribe/>
  - Join Us in #cybersecurity on the Slack
- Federal Unionist Network: <https://www.federalunionists.net/join-us/>
- Emergency Workplace Organizing Committee: <https://workerorganizing.org/>
- Whistleblower Aid: <https://whistlebloweraid.org/>



## Unions Organizing Tech Workers:

- CODE-CWA: <https://code-cwa.org/>
- OPEIU Local 1010: <https://www.techworkersunion-1010.org/>
- IFPTE (tangentially): <https://www.ifpte.org/>

<- These slides, resources, and more:  
<https://github.com/LArkema/Unions>



@LoganArkema