

# Apple store workers vote to authorize first strike over bargaining delays

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Workers at the first Apple store in the US to have unionized, in Towson, Maryland, have voted to authorize a strike as progress in bargaining for a first contract has stagnated. They could be the first Apple retail store workers to ever go on strike. International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' (IAM) Coalition of Organized Retail Employees (IAM Core) represents 100 workers at the Apple store who had their union election win certified in May 2022. They are one of two Apple stores in the US to have successfully unionized, the other being a location in Oklahoma City. David DiMaria, the machinists union's lead organizer at the Towson Apple store, said the strike authorization vote is the first step in the process before a strike sanction vote. "We have more bargaining dates coming up," said DiMaria. "We're going to go to the table. We're hoping the company will bargain in good faith, but frankly what we've seen over the past year or so is that they really haven't been, and we filed charges based on that they're not living up to their obligation under federal law to bargain in good faith with the union." DiMaria said the union is hoping Apple will follow federal labor law and live up to its own code of conduct corporate policies, and that over the past year of bargaining there hasn't been much progress on key issues for a first contract. Earlier this year, the union conducted a survey of Apple workers in response to the company's workers' rights assessment, where workers alleged the company has retaliated against workers for trying to unionize and has requested Apple sever its relationship with union avoidance consultants. Workers are pushing for higher wages, improvements to work-life balance, and fair scheduling practices in a first contract, while tentative agreements have been reached on several other issues. "Apple has a certain image, they have a supplier code of conduct that recognizes employees rights to organize, they have their own human rights code of conduct. And their behavior is just completely a 180 of what they purport to say their policy practice. So they're really not living up to their credo, their policies, their code of conduct. It's just, it's really disappointing," added DiMaria. "This really now rests with the board of directors. If Apple's not going to do the right thing, it's because the board of directors of this company have not put pressure on the CEO to actually just follow the law. And that's really all we're asking for is to follow the law." Amid, an uptick in union organizing efforts among its workers, Apple has faced numerous allegations of unfair labor practice charges filed with the National Labor Relations Board over its union opposition. Four unfair labor practice charges are currently pending before administrative law judges after National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) regional offices issued complaints finding merit in the charges. One of the complaints, issued in November, stems from the Towson store, alleging Apple provided benefits to non-union workers while withholding them from union members at the store. Four settlements covering five unfair labor practice charges have been reached with Apple. On 6 May, the NLRB upheld an

administrative judge ruling that found Apple unlawfully interrogate workers and confiscated and prohibited union flyers at the World Trade Center Apple store location. "At Apple, we work hard to provide an excellent experience for our retail team members and empower them to deliver exceptional service for our customers. We deeply value our team members and we're proud to provide them with industry-leading compensation and exceptional benefits. As always, we will engage with the union representing our team in Towson respectfully and in good faith," said an Apple spokesperson on the strike vote. They added on the unfair labor practice charges and NLRB complaint issued in November 2023: "We strongly deny these claims and look forward to providing the full set of facts to the NLRB."