

# Printers Union Sues Teamsters In DC Court Over Expulsion

By **MJ Koo**

Law360 (June 28, 2023, 7:30 PM EDT) -- A printers union tied up in arbitration challenging its expulsion from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters has hit the larger union with a suit in D.C. federal court, arguing the IBT can't continue to assert its authority over the locals it unilaterally seeks to shed, saying the disaffiliation effectively proceeded when the printers union dropped its challenge last month.

The union previously known as the Graphic Communications Conference of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, which filed the suit under its new name, Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America, asked a D.C. federal court Tuesday to declare that it didn't need to follow the Teamsters' constitution, arguing that the earlier suit's dismissal dissolved an injunction blocking the expulsion and effectively gave it independence pending the arbitration.

The PPPWU claimed that forcing "an independent international union" to obey another union's rules is "legally unjustifiable, logically incoherent and utterly inconsistent with its own course of conduct and statements."

Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Fred Zuckerman informed GCC President Kurt Freeman last year that the Teamsters would terminate the merger agreement effective Dec. 31.

In **November**, under its old name as the GCC, the union asked a D.C. federal judge to stop the Teamsters from "unilaterally" ending the agreement. The court agreed to a preliminary injunction, but the GCC says it voluntarily resolved the injunction when it dropped the case in **May** as the dispute eventually proceeded to arbitration and is thus independent.

"The IBT's termination ... automatically went into effect," the PPPWU said. "In reality, the IBT's termination of the merger agreement — the contractual mechanism that created, governed and maintained the parties' relationship — means that any obligations the GCC, its locals and its district councils had to the IBT have ceased," the complaint states.

Kara Deniz, Teamsters assistant director of the department of strategic Initiatives, told Law360 on Wednesday that the parent union disputes the printers' assertion.

"The GCC is violating the existing merger by setting up a new, illegitimate union without membership approval," Deniz said.

Counsel for the Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America did not respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Counsel information for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters was not provided Wednesday.

The PPPWU is represented by Steven F. Benz, Mark P. Hirschboeck, Kyle M. Wood of Kellogg Hansen Todd Figel & Frederick PLLC.

The case is Printing Packaging & Production Workers Union of North America et al. v. International Brotherhood of Teamsters, case number 1:23-cv-01872, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

--Editing by John C. Davenport.

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