

# Northwestern Football Players' Unionization Drive Halted

News

8.18.15

Steve Bernstein was quoted in *SHRM* on August 18, 2015. The article “Northwestern Football Players’ Unionization Drive Halted” discussed the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) recent ruling in which the agency declined to exercise jurisdiction over Northwestern University football players’ unionization case, halting the players’ drive to unionize.

The players were seeking a “first crack in their amateur status,” said Steve. With unionization, they might have been able to bargain regarding their hours of practice, equipment, safety issues and even tutoring, he noted.

But as a practical matter, Steve said a union is unlikely to get cards signed by players at all 17 schools.

The board’s decision allows unions to still try to unionize other groups of workers at colleges and universities, including cafeteria workers, graduate students, student janitors and other student employees, he remarked.

If the board had ruled the other way, it would have been seen as out of step with public opinion and possibly even a target in the presidential election, he added. That may explain why this board, which so often has expanded its jurisdiction, in this case “turned and ran the other way.”

To read the full article, please visit [SHRM](#).

---

Please reach out to our [Media team](#) for any news inquiries.

## Related People

---





**Steven M. Bernstein**

Regional Managing Partner and Labor Relations Group Co-Chair

813.769.7513

Email