



Why the Labor Movement Matters— and Who Protects It

Bush Gottlieb

You hear it all the time on the news and during political campaigns: Strengthen the middle class. Create jobs. Protect the purchasing power of Middle America.

But who are these middle class members? And how do we support them?

According to attorney Bob Bush of Bush Gottlieb, a legal firm dedicated exclusively to labor law, the answer lies in the protection and preservation of unions. “The farmworkers, the machinists, the janitors—these are union members who make up much of the middle class,” he says. “When we undermine the purchasing power of the middle class, everyone suffers. A strong labor movement means a strong country.”

Labor Advocates

Born out of the civil rights and anti-war movements of the early 1970s, Bush Gottlieb has always had progressive DNA. When the political climate simmered in the mid-to-late 1970s, the firm made the decision to further refine its niche and focus exclusively on labor unions.

“The people in this firm could have done a lot of things, but we believed so strongly in the power of the labor movement that we made the conscious decision to specialize in the highest quality labor law possible, even though we had no labor clients at the time. We built it all from scratch,” Bush says.

“Unions certainly don’t pay as much as corporations,” he adds with a laugh, “but we believe we’re doing good things.”

Today, the 14-attorney firm counts among its diverse clients the United Farm Workers, Teamsters and unions in the entertainment industry, including SAG-AFTRA, the Directors Guild of America and the IATSE.

What makes the firm unique is that it steadily retains clients year after year, decade after decade, even as union leadership turns over every few years—a true testament to

(standing, l to r) Robert A. Bush, David Adelstein, Erica Deutsch, Robert Kropp Jr., Ira L. Gottlieb, David E. Ahdoot, Hector DeHaro, Hope J. Singer, Kirk M. Prestegard, Joseph A. Kohanski, (seated, l to r) Josh Adams, Julie Gutman Dickinson, Peter S. Dickinson, Jason Wojciechowski

the caliber of service the firm provides. The firm goes on to provide other essential legal services such as representation of multiemployer pension and health plans and insolvency-related work, particularly with regard to securing residuals payments in the entertainment industry.

“Our job is to provide the most honest and transparent advice for the membership, regardless of the current leadership,” says Bush. “Our advice is never colored by a political agenda.”

Unions: Good for All

If there’s one thing Bush wants to leave you with, it’s this: “Unions are good for you.”

When the middle class has access to dependable pensions and the ability to make significant purchases, like homes and cars, it’s good for our economy, he stresses: “We are proud to serve the labor movement. That is our mission.”

“A STRONG LABOR MOVEMENT MEANS A STRONG COUNTRY.”

