

Newsom signs Teamsters-backed labor bill aimed at Trump-proofing union issues

The move comes after the Teamsters temporarily put the brakes on a self-driving bill, instead announcing its full support of the bill, AB 288.

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Teamsters rally outside the state Capitol in Sacramento, California, on Sept. 19, 2023, urging Gov. Gavin Newsom to sign a bill to require a safety driver in self-driving trucks. | Forest Hunt/POLITICO

SACRAMENTO, California — Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law on Tuesday a bill meant to bolster the state's authority over labor disputes as the Trump administration's National Labor Relations Board is hamstrung by [vacancies and legal challenges](#) and Democratic-led states look to [step into the void](#).

“With the federal government not only asleep at the wheel, but driving into incoming traffic, it is more important than ever that states stand up to protect workers and ensure they have a path to defend their right to organize and collectively bargain,” Newsom said in a statement announcing the signing.

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Details: Under Assemblymember Tina McKinnor’s [AB 288](#), which takes effect Jan. 1, workers in the state will be able to go to the California Public Employment Relations Board if the NLRB does not respond to a case for six months as well as for accusations of employer retaliation. The new law also expands the state’s authority over other labor matters like union elections. The NLRB has faced a slowdown under the Trump administration following the firing of board members and other officials, [leaving the board without a quorum](#) for months.

The Teamsters have specifically targeted Amazon, accusing the company of violating labor law after a San Francisco warehouse joined the union.

Big picture: The governor’s final stamp of approval comes after the Teamsters threw its support behind the bill while temporarily shelving its proposal on self-driving vehicles. Teamsters California Co-Chair Peter Finn vowed the union would be back with that bill next year, telling POLITICO’s California Decoded newsletter that it is “committed to ensuring the strongest version of AB 33 is signed into law no matter how long it takes.”

Newsom has been forging ahead with regulations that would allow companies to test self-driving trucks on public roads. California is one of a handful of states that prohibit that kind of testing, and the governor twice vetoed Teamsters-backed bills that would have required human operators in self-driving vehicles.