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A New Player Joins the Battle - The AFL-CIO Throws Its Support Behind Game Development Employees And Urges Them To Form A Union

Friday, February 22, 2019

This article is a follow-up to my [January 30, 2019 article](#) on the rising desire amongst videogame industry employees to become union-represented.

UPDATE - On Friday, February 15, 2019, the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of unions in the United States, posted an [open letter to game developers](#) urging employees to join a union and engage in collective bargaining. The AFL-CIO describes a disparity between game industry CEOs and their workers and calls on the workers to “use your collective voice” and fight.

This is, to put it bluntly, a big deal. While the letter is a call for game developers to unionize, it’s also a statement by the AFL-CIO that the games industry now sits within the AFL-CIO’s sights. A plan is plainly in place—the letter calls out the CEOs of EA and Activision-Blizzard by name and also identifies a specific game developer union group that is assisting employees to unionize.

The industry survey discussed in my previous article described employees who were uncertain about the viability of unionization. But those employees can now be emboldened by the declaration of a battle plan buttressed by experienced AFL-CIO muscle. With a single letter, the AFL-CIO has (1) given game employees a rallying point; (2) identified some CEO faces as a common enemy; and (3) pledged the considerable resources of the AFL-CIO as support in the upcoming fight. Now the question is no longer **if** union organizing will take place within the games industry, but how impactful it will be **when** it occurs.

The AFL-CIO’s involvement is a major change to the employment dynamics of game development. Game development companies need to take proactive, smart, and thoughtful action **now** to respond to this development. The attorneys at Ryley Carlock & Applewhite have decades of experience in assisting employers with fully exercising their rights to free speech and controlling their workplace when faced with the threat of union organizing. Please contact the author to learn more.

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