

PSH Employment Attorney Sean Fontes Weighs In on Unionization Challenges

Description

Partridge Snow & Hahn [Employment & Labor](#) law attorney and former general counsel for the Rhode Island Department of Labor [Sean Fontes](#) was recently interviewed in *SupplyChainBrain* about Amazon's standoff in negotiating a contract with its recently formed Staten Island warehouse union. The widely publicized formation of Amazon's first union highlights that – despite the decline in unionization overall – unions remain a threat to employers. However, Amazon's past success in avoiding a union despite extensive unionizing efforts and its current ability to avoid a contract with their one union should serve as a reminder of the importance of being proactive in union avoidance efforts.

In some industries, the probability of a union forming would not warrant the level of avoidance tactics detailed in the article, such as alleged retaliatory employment decisions or sky-high legal and nonlegal union avoidance consultancy bills (reported to be over \$14 million in one year). But in most industries, a reasonable level of proactive union avoidance strategy is advised. This is particularly true given that each time a union effort makes the news, some employees are inclined to think about a potential union. In addition, new state laws have been passing across the nation (including one this summer in Rhode Island) which make the once common mandatory union-avoidance trainings illegal, requiring more time and effort to be put into strategizing as to how to creatively avoid unions.

Employers should consult with their experienced Labor & Employment attorneys to review their union avoidance strategies before it is too late.

Read the *SupplyChainBrain* feature: [From Ballots to Bargaining: The Struggle to Unionize at Amazon's Warehouses](#)

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