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Harry Reid Tells GOP To Stop Pressuring Independent Labor Agency

Benjy Sarlin | May 11, 2011, 11:24AM



Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV)

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Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) defended the National Labor Relations Board on Wednesday amid a concentrated attack from prominent Republicans around the country, accusing conservative critics of meddling with an independent federal agency.

"We need agencies like the NLRB to be able to operate freely and without political pressures," he said in a floor speech. "We need to keep our independent agencies independent. This case is for them to decide, not us."

Led by Governor Nikki Haley (R-SC) and Sens. Lindsey Graham and Jim Demint (R-SC), Republicans have been waging an increasingly loud battle against the NLRB over a lawsuit alleging that Boeing [illegally retaliated against unions](#) in Washington State by opening a production line in South Carolina. Yesterday, they demanded at a press conference that the White House condemn the suit, with Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) even suggesting the president may be involved in a [vast conspiracy](#) to target GOP states.

Reid said in his remarks that he was not defending the merits of the NLRB's case, only the neutrality and independence of the NLRB in their handling of the law. He added that Republicans' attacks fed into a larger campaign against unions.

"They're threatened because when a large, organized group is so concerned with workers' rights, the members of that group vote in large numbers. And because Republicans and the big businesses they defend so often try to take away workers' rights, workers don't often vote Republican," he said. "But this kind of interference is inappropriate. It is disgraceful and dangerous. We wouldn't allow threats to prosecutors or U.S. Attorneys, trying to stop them from moving forward with charges they see fit to bring to the courts and we shouldn't stand for this."

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