



Dear Honorable Members of the Dallas City Council,

I write today, first, to thank you for the thoughtful discussion around Dallas Black Dance Theatre (DBDT) in yesterday's City Council meeting, and for your ultimate decision to delay the approval of the Company's city funding until further review. This is an important moment for the arts, for labor, and for justice in Dallas.

At the meeting yesterday, there was discussion around whether the City Council should get involved in labor disputes. As the speaker from the funding committee of the Office of Arts and Culture explained, city funding is contingent upon compliance with federal law.

As you know, we have filed multiple unfair labor practice charges against DBDT with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), accusing the company of violating federal labor law. **Confidentially, yesterday, the NLRB informed us that it will issue a complaint that includes nearly 20 allegations of unfair labor practices against DBDT, and the Regional Director in Fort Worth has recommended that the agency seek emergency relief in federal district court due to the severity of DBDT's misconduct.** AGMA plans to publicize the complaint to the press and the public with more details as soon as the complaint is issued.

I also want to take a few moments to correct some of the misinformation that Georgia Scaife, DBDT's Board President, was allowed to put into the record in yesterday's meeting, some of which has already been publicly debunked. In front of the Council, Ms. Scaife said that AGMA, the dancers' union, had not reached out to request bargaining until October. This is false. I personally emailed Executive Director Zenetta Drew and DBDT's counsel on May 31, just two days after the dancers won their union election, to request bargaining. The subject line of my email was "AGMA – Bargaining Request Letter." On September 20, AGMA sent another bargaining request, which management themselves did not acknowledge until October 2. We publicly addressed this and more falsehoods [earlier this month here.](#)

Ms. Scaife also stated that the replacement dancers are union members. They are not. The replacement dancers have not joined AGMA. Were they to become members, they would be prohibited from working at DBDT by the official [Do Not Work order issued by the AGMA Board of Governors against DBDT on August 12.](#)

She also stated that, because of the Union, the leadership of DBDT was not able to fix the inadequate wages of the dancers without bargaining. Rest assured that if DBDT had reached out offering to increase dancer wages, there would have been no opposition from AGMA.

Perhaps the boldest statement that Ms. Scaife made was that DBDT leadership is not “doing union busting.” Their union busting began even prior to the dancers’ union election with the delivery of a formulaic anti-union letter from founder Ann Williams to the dancers on May 28. The letter concluded with an emphatic, **bold font “Vote no.”** We have this letter if you’re interested in reading it. After the dancers voted unanimously to unionize on May 29, the union busting continued with the string of retaliatory actions that have been [well chronicled by this point](#), culminating with the ultimate act of union busting: the firing of the entire unionized workforce on August 9.

Again, on behalf of the fired dancers of DBDT, AGMA, the arts and labor communities, and the broader Dallas community, I thank you for the seriousness and care with which you have approached this situation and for taking action this week. As you continue to investigate the situation at DBDT, I encourage you to center the voices of the fired dancers and learn more about the working conditions and workplace culture that artists and other employees of the company have experienced for many years under DBDT’s longtime leaders. I know that the dancers would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you.

If I can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

In Solidarity,

Griff Braun  
National Organizing Director  
AGMA