

# Topsail Voice

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## MEXICAN UNION TO SUE NORTH CAROLINA

MEXICO CITY—The Authentic Labor Front, a Mexican union, plans to file a complaint under the North American Free Trade Agreement against North Carolina to remove the ban on collective bargaining for public employees.

Although the union has utilized the NAFTA labor provisions in the past to target alleged violations by private American companies, this will be the first time it has actually filed a lawsuit against a U.S. state. The group claims that North Carolina is in violation of the international trade agreement by denying more than 650,000 workers across the state the right to collectively bargain and form unions.

The United Electrical Workers (UE), a union that has roughly 3,000 members in North Carolina called on Mexican labor leaders to assist them in their efforts to have the ban repealed. UE Director of Organization Robert Kingsley stated at a news conference that calling on the Mexican labor union was to due to North Carolina's US\$6 billion trading relationship with Mexico. He believes that crossing national borders would increase the union's chances to successfully negotiate with global companies.

The UE has enjoyed a strategic alliance with Authentic Labor Front since 1992, working together to oppose the enactment of NAFTA. They again worked together in 1994 to file a joint complaint against General Electric for its anti-union policies in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The UE is not the only ones upset about the North Carolina's prohibition against collective bargaining. Last month, Raleigh sanitation workers went on strike alleging the law violates their civil rights. "The Constitution gives it to us, the right to freedom of assembly, free speech, file grievances against the government, said Angaza Laughinghouse of the NC Public Service Workers Union. "We need to go ahead and institutionalize this in our law here in North Carolina."