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WGA Negotiation Committee Recommends Strike Authorization Vote

Following some media reports of a tense two weeks of bargaining between the Writers Guild of America and the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers for a successor agreement to the WGA 2014 Theatrical and Television Basic Agreement (also known as the WGA MBA), lead negotiators for the WGA announced in a March 24 letter to WGA members that the WGA negotiation committee voted unanimously to recommend that the board of directors conduct a strike authorization vote of the membership.

The 2014 WGA MBA expires on May 1. Legally, the WGA cannot strike until after that date. While a strike authorization does not automatically mean that there will be a strike, it does, if approved by a majority of WGA members, empower the WGA to call a strike after the expiration of the current WGA MBA, giving the WGA more leverage in negotiations.

The WGA negotiating committee's current recommendation to conduct a strike authorization vote is the first of three steps that have to take place before the WGA could call a strike. The second step, which is in process, is for the WGA's board of directors to vote on whether to ask the WGA's members for strike authorization. (The WGA West board of directors voted Monday night in favor of going to the membership for strike authorization; the WGA East board of directors voted Tuesday night and results are still pending at the time this alert was prepared.) Assuming a majority of the WGA East's board of directors approves a strike authorization vote, the third step is to conduct a membership vote by ballot, with the result determined

by majority vote. Members would effectively be asked the yes/no question of whether the WGA should be authorized to declare a strike, if and when the WGA deems it advisable to do so, in connection with negotiations for a successor WGA MBA. Early reports suggest that membership voting would conclude by April 24 or 25, one week before the May 1 expiration date of the 2014 WGA MBA.

There are currently mixed reports as to how a strike authorization vote would shake out, especially after the financial blow to both sides of the industry during the 2007-2008 WGA strike. In 2007, nearly one half of the WGA's membership cast ballots in the strike authorization vote and, of those, over 90% voted in favor of authorizing a strike. That strike commenced one week after the expiration of the then-current MBA and lasted for 100 days.

We are actively monitoring these negotiations and will provide updates as necessary. In the event that a strike appears imminent, we have various ways in which we can assist our talent and management clients, including the possibility of entering into Interim Agreements with the WGA, which we have done for some independent companies during the 2007-2008 strike.

If you have any questions or for more information on the WGA negotiations, please contact [Ivy Kagan Bierman](#) at 310.282.2327 or [Michael Maizner](#) at 212.407.4176.

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