[Can I Be Fired for Not Signing an Illegal Waiver?](#)

I have worked for a not-for-profit for four years. My executive director recently fired two employees for different reasons and each employee threatened to sue for wrongful dismissal. Both have now settled. My executive director is now having contracts written up (not by a lawyer, but by the company controller), whereby he wants all salaried employees to sign a waiver that they will not sue in the case of future dismissal without cause. I don't feel that I should sign this and waive any right. Can my executive director terminate me for not signing this waiver?

— Name withheld

[learn_more caption="**Answer**"]

As a matter of law, you can't be fired for refusing to sign such a waiver; unfortunately, as a practical matter, you might have to sign it to keep your job.

EXPLANATION

I really wish this letter had come from your boss so I could tell him in no uncertain terms that he's behaving illegally. The waiver he's asking for is essentially a blank cheque that ignores employees' guaranteed rights. In addition, under employment standards laws, employees **are not allowed** to waive all of their rights even if they want to. Not only is the waiver invalid but terminating you for refusing to sign it would constitute wrongful dismissal.

The problem is that having the law on your side may be cold comfort if you end up losing your job. Hopefully your boss will talk to a lawyer who will set him straight on the law. But if he does insist on ramming that waiver down your throat, you'll have to make a difficult decision. Standing up for your rights might get you fired and force you into court or arbitration. So it would be hard fault you for backing off and signing the darned waiver if that's what's necessary to save your job.

I suggest you consult your own lawyer who will describe your options.

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Thanks and good luck. This is a tricky situation that just goes to illustrate the limitations of legal protections and the vulnerability of employees to illegal coercion by their bosses.

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