



**SAG·AFTRA®**



**INTERACTIVE MEDIA  
(VIDEO GAME)  
STRIKE AUTHORIZATION  
2023**

**REFERENDUM BOOKLET  
SEPT. 5, 2023**

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The SAG-AFTRA National Board unanimously recommends members **VOTE YES** for the **2023 Interactive Media (Video Game) Strike Authorization**.



All eligible members were mailed a postcard on Tuesday, September 5, 2023, with a PIN number and instructions on how to vote online or how to request a paper ballot. If necessary, you can retrieve your PIN number at the voting website, **vote.ivsballot.com/interactive2023**, by clicking "Find My PIN."

Ballots — whether submitted online or by mail — must be received by 5 p.m. PDT on Monday, September 25, 2023.

## MEMBER INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

– VIA ZOOM –

**THURSDAY, SEPT. 7, AND TUESDAY, SEPT. 12, 2023**

**6-8 PT / 7-9 MT / 8-10 CT / 9-11 ET**

Visit [sagaftra.org/videogames2023](https://sagaftra.org/videogames2023) for RSVP details.

For questions, email [interactive2023@sagaftra.org](mailto:interactive2023@sagaftra.org) or call (323) 549-6545

### PLEASE NOTE: ALL MEETING INFORMATION SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Check [sagaftra.org/videogames2023](https://sagaftra.org/videogames2023) and watch your email for notices. All paid-up SAG-AFTRA members in good standing who work the Interactive Media Agreement are urged to attend these important informational meetings. These meetings are only open to paid-up SAG-AFTRA members in good standing (paid through Oct. 31, 2023, or in compliance with the May 2023 Dues Relief Extension Program), no guests are allowed.

Parents/guardians of performers under 18 years old are welcome.



Dear Member,

It has been nearly a year since we began bargaining in connection with our video game contract, the Interactive Media Agreement (IMA). Since that time, SAG-AFTRA has held five separate multiday bargaining sessions with an industry bargaining group consisting of signatory video game companies:

- **Activision Productions Inc.**
- **Blindlight LLC**
- **Disney Character Voices Inc.**
- **Electronic Arts Productions Inc.**
- **Formosa Interactive LLC**
- **Insomniac Games Inc.**
- **Take 2 Productions Inc.**
- **VoiceWorks Productions Inc.**
- **WB Games Inc.**

Despite these efforts, the companies have failed to address our members' needs. The main sticking points are artificial intelligence (AI), wages and safety.

We have additional bargaining dates set for the end of September, and our negotiating committee and national board unanimously agree that our negotiating committee should have a member-approved strike authorization in hand when bargaining resumes. We urge you to vote YES to empower our committee to fight for you on these existential issues.

Though the issues affecting performers who work in video games mirror those issues affecting TV/Theatrical performers, the Interactive Media Agreement negotiations with the video game companies don't affect the timing or expected progress of negotiations or our strike on the TV/Theatrical contracts. A strike authorization vote on this agreement will not impact the TV/Theatrical strike.

With Interactive Media Agreement negotiations, the first two sticking points, in particular, should sound familiar.

Unregulated use of AI poses an equal or even greater threat to performers in the video game industry than it does in film and television. A great deal of our members' work in this space is voiceover, and the capacity to cheaply and easily create convincing digital replicas of performer voices is already here and widely available. You can find the tools to do it yourself with a simple Google search. Without protections, not only will this be the future of how voices are recorded for video game characters, but your own voice recordings will be used to train the AI systems that replace you.

Work under the IMA also includes a great deal of performance capture, where trained professionals, many of whom are stunt performers, provide digitally captured performances used to give expressive movement to video game characters. This work can also be replicated through AI. Without protective contract language, your face, your expressions and your signature moves can become the basis for an unlimited number of characters across an unlimited number of games without your involvement or even knowledge. What career does that leave for you?

Our committee is fighting for protective language on AI that will require informed consent and appropriate payment for the creation and use of digital replicas and for the use of our members' performances to train AI systems. These vital protections are not only righteous and fair — after all, who besides you should own your voice and image? — but necessary to counter the existential threat to member work posed by the unregulated use of AI.

Last year, signatory companies generated over \$19 billion in global revenue, yet these employers are also echoing the position of our film and television employers when it comes to wages. Namely, they believe that the best way to deal with inflation is to make their workers poorer while they increase the price of their product. Under the employers' wage offer — a 5% increase effective upon ratification, another 4% increase in the second year and a 3% increase in

the third year — our members will likely be making less in real dollars in 2025, at the conclusion of this contract term, than they were in 2020!

**This is unacceptable.**

Our committee is fighting for the same wage increases that we are seeking in our film and television contracts: 11% retroactive to expiration of the prior IMA and 4% increases in the second and third years of the agreement. This is what is necessary for our members' wages to keep up with inflation. You should not have to take a real dollar pay cut to subsidize the bottom lines of companies making billions in profits by selling your work!

Lastly, but certainly not least, there are several key safety protections missing from the IMA. This contract does not provide rest periods for on-camera performers. Our committee is fighting to get our on-camera performers the same five-minutes-per-hour rest period that off-camera performers are entitled to. We need a set medic present when stunts or hazardous work is performed, just like on a film or television set, but that's not currently provided for in the IMA. Employers should be prohibited from requesting performers to do stunts on self-taped auditions. Right now, the IMA doesn't address self-taped auditions at all.

Should it prove necessary to strike the IMA, we believe that striking at the same time that we are striking our film and television contracts makes sense. These are largely the same fight over the same issues, and members are stronger together. By standing shoulder to shoulder and in solidarity, we multiply our strength and send a clear and unmistakable message to all of our employers: We will not be exploited. Without fair terms that protect our members and respect their contributions, employers should not have the benefit of our members' services.

We urge you to vote YES to authorize a strike should it prove necessary. Given the issues at stake, if we don't empower ourselves now, there may be no contract left to fight for in the future.

Postcards were mailed to eligible voters on Tuesday, Sept. 5, with instructions on how to vote online at [vote.ivsballot.com/interactive2023](https://vote.ivsballot.com/interactive2023). Voting will close at 5 p.m. PT on **Monday, Sept. 25, 2023**.

There will be two informational meetings, **Thursday, Sept. 7**, and **Tuesday, Sept. 12, both from 6-8 PT / 7-9 MT / 8-10 CT / 9-11 ET**, to give members more information and answer your questions and concerns.

RSVP details, FAQs and more information is available at [sagaftra.org/videogames2023](https://sagaftra.org/videogames2023).

[RSVP for Sept. 7](#)

[RSVP for Sept. 12](#)

Let's demonstrate to our employers that we are united and willing to fight for what's fair!

We need to ensure that our voices and faces are not taken by corporations to make money while we are left out in the cold without consent or fair compensation. This is not just our fight. It's everyone's fight, and it's a fight we have to win.

**Vote YES on the Interactive Media (Video Game) Strike Authorization.**

In unity,



Fran Drescher  
President



Duncan Crabtree-Ireland  
National Executive Director



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **WHAT IS THE STATUS OF THE INTERACTIVE MEDIA AGREEMENT?**

For nearly a year, the Interactive Media Agreement Negotiating Committee has been bargaining in good faith with signatory video game companies, but the employers have refused to agree to vital terms our members need.

## **WILL A STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE ON THE INTERACTIVE MEDIA AGREEMENT AFFECT THE CURRENT TV/THEATRICAL STRIKE AND NEGOTIATIONS?**

Though the issues affecting performers who work in video games mirror those issues affecting TV/Theatrical performers, the Interactive Media Agreement negotiations with the video game companies don't affect the timing or expected progress of negotiations or our strike on the TV/Theatrical contract. A strike authorization vote on this agreement will not impact the TV/Theatrical strike.

## **WHAT IS A STRIKE AUTHORIZATION?**

A strike authorization is a powerful tool that gives your Interactive Media Agreement Negotiating Committee added leverage at the bargaining table by demonstrating to the video game companies that SAG-AFTRA members support their committee and are willing to fight for a fair deal. It does not automatically mean there will be a strike. If 75% or more of eligible members casting ballots vote YES, a strike authorization passes and gives your National Board the authority to call a strike after the contract expires. In the case of SAG-AFTRA's Interactive Media Agreement, assuming a strike authorization is approved by members, that means the National Board can call a strike anytime after September 26, 2023.

## **WHY IS SAG-AFTRA REQUESTING A STRIKE AUTHORIZATION?**

SAG-AFTRA has been in Interactive Media Agreement negotiations with the video game companies (Activision Productions Inc., Blindlight LLC, Disney Character Voices Inc., Electronic Arts Productions Inc., Formosa Interactive LLC, Insomniac Games Inc., Take 2 Productions Inc., VoiceWorks Productions Inc., and WB Games Inc.) since October 2022. Throughout the negotiations, the companies have refused to agree to critical terms our members need. Though we've made gains in some areas, the contract expired on November 7 of last year, and since then, we've been operating month to month. Our next bargaining session is scheduled for September 26, 27 and 28, but we fear without having substantial leverage in place, the companies will continue to drag their feet on making an acceptable deal.

The outcome of the IMA negotiations will determine whether our members working in interactive media can continue earning a professional living doing the job they love. Compensation has been undercut by inflation, unregulated use of artificial intelligence threatens the very voices and likenesses that form the basis of professional acting careers and members' safety is not being taken seriously. To maximize our leverage, we are asking members to vote to authorize an Interactive Media Agreement strike should discussions at the bargaining table prove unproductive. A strike authorization vote doesn't guarantee a strike will occur; rather, it's a tool we can use to help our negotiating team secure the best deal possible.

## **WHAT DOES A YES VOTE MEAN?**

With a YES vote in hand, the National Board will have the ability to declare a strike if bargaining fails to produce a deal our members will accept. A YES vote is a strong show of solidarity with your fellow working actors on the Interactive Media Agreements and the Negotiating Committee, giving them the backing they can leverage to reach a deal and fight for the contract we deserve.

## **WHAT DOES A NO VOTE MEAN?**

A no vote tells employers that they do not have to make a fair deal in order to keep our members working. Without the threat of a work stoppage, management has no incentive to offer the wage increases, AI protections and other terms that our members need.

## HOW MANY VOTES ARE NEEDED IN ORDER FOR A STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE TO PASS?

The vote requires at least 75% of eligible members casting ballots to vote YES to authorize the National Board to declare a strike once SAG-AFTRA's contract expires. While 75% is the required threshold, we want as close to a 100% YES vote as possible. This shows employers we are united in our resolve for a fair contract.

## DOES THE PASSAGE OF A STRIKE AUTHORIZATION VOTE MEAN SAG-AFTRA WILL GO ON STRIKE?

No. Instead, the strike authorization vote permits the National Board to declare a strike if employers fail to protect and uphold the basic working conditions of our members — the professional performers who make this one of the most successful industries in the world. Your negotiating committee and National Board will do everything they can to reach an agreement without a strike, and the leverage of a successful strike authorization vote will strengthen us to push for the best deal possible.

## WHO IS SAG-AFTRA NEGOTIATING WITH?

SAG-AFTRA is negotiating with the following video game companies: Activision Productions Inc, Blindlight LLC, Disney Character Voices Inc., Electronic Arts Productions Inc., Formosa Interactive LLC, Insomniac Games Inc., Take 2 Productions Inc., VoiceWorks Productions Inc., and WB Games Inc.

## WHO REPRESENTS SAG-AFTRA DURING NEGOTIATIONS?

Members who work in voiceover and performance capture for video games are the driving force during negotiations. The committee advises and works in partnership with National Executive Director and Chief Negotiator Duncan Crabtree-Ireland, Chief Contracts Officer Ray Rodriguez and a staff team of contract experts and seasoned negotiators.

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR ISSUES ON THE TABLE IN THE UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS?

The voice and performance capture artists who bring video game characters to life deserve a contract that protects their voices, likenesses and careers and reflects the value they bring to the multibillion dollar gaming industry. The critical issues at play are similar to those at stake in SAG-AFTRA's TV/Theatrical/Streaming negotiations.

These issues include:

- Artificial intelligence protections around consent, control, transparency and compensation.
- Wage increases that reflect compensation erosion due to inflation.
- Safety for on-camera performers and vocal stress protections for voice artists.

SAG-AFTRA has continued to negotiate in good faith with the interactive media companies, but those companies remain determined to underpay performers while turning a blind eye to key tenets of performer safety and exploiting actors' performances and likenesses without proper informed consent. For many performers, their first job may be their last, as companies become increasingly eager to scan our members or train AI with their voices as soon as they show up for work.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF SAG-AFTRA GOES ON STRIKE?

SAG-AFTRA leadership (National Board) must have a successful strike authorization vote before a strike can be called. If a strike is called, members will withhold their labor and not perform any services for struck companies. SAG-AFTRA members will then engage in collective actions such as picketing to put pressure on the video game producers.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Postcards were sent to eligible members on Tuesday, September 5, with instructions on how to vote, and voting will close at 5 p.m. PT on **Monday, September 25.**

There will be informational meetings on **Thursday, Sept. 7,** and **Tuesday, Sept. 12,** both from 6-8 PT / 7-9 MT / 8-10 CT / 9-11 ET, to give members more information and answer your questions and concerns.

More information is available at [sagaftra.org/videogames2023](https://sagaftra.org/videogames2023).



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