

# AFL-CIO

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT

April 29, 2018

Dear Representative:

I am writing to ask you to become an original co-sponsor of the Protect the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. For too long, employers have been able to violate the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) with impunity, routinely denying workers our basic right to join with coworkers for fairness on the job. As a result, the collective strength of workers to negotiate for better pay and benefits has eroded and income inequality has reached levels that predate the Great Depression.

The PRO Act would modernize the NLRA by bringing its remedies in line with other workplace laws. In addition to imposing financial penalties on companies and individual corporate officers who violate the law, the bill would give workers the option of bringing our case to federal court. The bill would make elections fairer by prohibiting employers from requiring their employees to attend “captive audience” meetings whose sole purpose is to convince workers to vote against the union.

Under the bill, once workers vote to form a union, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) would be authorized to order that the employer commence bargaining a first contract. These orders would be enforced in district courts to ensure swift justice, avoiding the complex and drawn out process in the courts of appeals. In addition, the bill would ensure that employees are not deprived of our right to a union because an employer deliberately misclassifies us as supervisors or independent contractors.

Too often, when workers choose to form a union, employers stall the bargaining process to avoid reaching an agreement. The PRO Act would establish a process for mediation and arbitration to help the parties achieve a first contract. This important change would make the freedom to negotiate a reality for countless workers who form unions but never get to enjoy the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement.

The PRO Act recognizes that employees need the freedom to picket or withhold our labor in order to push for the workplace changes we seek. The bill protects employees’ right to strike by preventing employers from hiring permanent replacement workers. It also allows unrepresented employees to engage in collective action or class action lawsuits to enforce basic workplace rights, rather than being forced to arbitrate such claims alone.

Finally, the bill would eliminate right to work laws. These laws have been promoted by a network of billionaires and special interest groups to give more power to corporations at the expense of workers, and have had the effect of lowering wages and eroding pensions and health care coverage in states where they have been adopted.

Restoring our middle class is dependent on strengthening the collective power of workers to negotiate for better pay and working conditions. We urge you to co-sponsor the PRO Act and help us build an economy that works for all working families and not just the wealthy and well-connected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Samuel".

William Samuel, Director  
Government Affairs

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**American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations**

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