

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

November 13, 2025

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, representing 15 million working people across 64 affiliate unions, I urge you to oppose H.R. 1723, the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2025. This bill would deny National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protections to hundreds of thousands of workers employed by tribal-owned and -operated enterprises on Indian land.

The AFL-CIO respects the principle of tribal sovereignty and acknowledges the unique status of tribal governments. We also believe that honoring tribal sovereignty and protecting workers' fundamental rights are not mutually exclusive. Unfortunately, H.R. 1723 pits these principles against one another.

H.R. 1723 would immediately place existing collective bargaining agreements covering tens of thousands of workers in legal jeopardy. It would exempt a wide range of commercial enterprises from NLRA protections, including casinos, hotels, construction companies, power plants, and retail businesses. These enterprises often compete directly with non-tribal businesses, serve the general public, and employ workers who have no voice in tribal governance. Denying these workers NLRA rights would leave them without any enforceable recourse to improve their wages, benefits, and working conditions.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) already applies a careful, case-by-case approach to determine jurisdiction over tribal enterprises. Since the 2004 San Manuel Indian Bingo and Casino decision, the NLRB has recognized that tribal sovereignty and workers' rights can and must coexist. This balanced framework works and should not be replaced by legislation that broadly removes coverage.

We welcome opportunities to work with tribal governments, members of Congress, and other stakeholders to ensure that both tribal sovereignty and workers' rights are respected. But we cannot support legislation that categorically removes the right to organize and collectively bargain from workers in tribal enterprises.

For these reasons, we urge you not to support H.R. 1723, the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2025, and to defend the rights of all workers to organize and bargain collectively.

Sincerely,



Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs