



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

December 17, 2025

Dear Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to provide our views on a number of bills that may be mentioned at today's hearing. A series of bills have been introduced recently proposing changes to the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA). These bills would do little to advance union members' rights and much to create unnecessary administrative burdens on unions, while undermining workers' democratic self-government.

H.R. 6136 ("PURE Act") would strike out an LMRDA provision allowing unions to elect their officers by delegates at conventions and would instead require secret-ballot elections by the membership. Unions' election processes are already democratic. Part of that process is the adoption of a constitution that governs the election of national officers. Some unions have direct elections. Others have secret-ballot elections for delegates, local-by-local, who attend a convention and cast ballots for national officers. That model is akin to how the House of Representatives elects its Speaker. This bill would prohibit that model. Yet the constitutional provisions governing a union's election process were adopted democratically by the members, and they can be amended democratically by the members. Congress should not rewrite workers' union constitutions to impose a system over their wishes. For example, members may prefer the delegate system because it is less costly than a nationwide direct election, allowing the union to dedicate more resources to a bargaining fight or a strike fund for the members.

H.R. 6139 ("Union Members Right to Know Act") would require unions to provide a copy of the relevant collective bargaining agreement, the LMRDA and a summary of its titles, and the union's constitution and bylaws on an annual basis, even though unions must currently provide this information on demand. There is no reason for this annual mailing other than to compel unions to expend significant resources on compliance, taking resources away from member representation, organizing, bargaining campaigns, or a number of any other critical priorities for members.

H.R. 6141 ("Fair Access to Justice for Union Members Act") would strike from the LMRDA a provision allowing for a union to require exhaustion of internal appeals procedures prior to litigation against the union. Unions, as democratic organizations, often provide robust appeals procedures to resolve differences with their members internally. These appeal procedures often reverse decisions made by unions, resulting in favorable outcomes for the member, and without the need for the member to file a lawsuit and pay related costs and fees. Eliminating the requirement to exhaust these provisions will make it harder for union members seeking change and will burden the courts with lawsuits that could have been resolved internally within the union's democratic processes.

H.R. 6142 (“Ask the Union Members Act”) would prohibit a labor organization from executing a CBA unless it is ratified by a majority vote of the members, held by secret ballot, and only after members are provided the proposed contract at least 72 hours before the vote, and would make it an unfair labor practice to authorize a strike unless such strike is authorized by a majority vote of the members voting by secret ballot. These provisions would drag out disputes (to the detriment of employers, unions, and workers) by making it harder for unions to settle contracts and undermine the very purpose of the National Labor Relations Act, which is to encourage labor peace by resolving labor disputes quickly. They would lead to protracted litigation over whether contracts were properly ratified or a strike vote was properly taken. Indeed, the Board has specifically said it doesn’t examine how a ratification was held (except for limited circumstances) precisely because the Board wants to settle contracts, not have the parties engage in litigation over the ratification process. The contract ratification provision is so poorly worded it would require that labor organizations would have to hold a secret-ballot vote of all its members to ratify any CBA, even if the CBA doesn’t apply to that member. When it comes to contract ratification, most unions already have a constitutional requirement or practice to ratify contracts, and there is no incentive to impose a contract that workers don’t want as members could decertify their union. The strike provision would undermine the union and its members’ right to strike and empower employers to scuttle attempts to strike. When it comes to strike votes, again most unions already have a constitutional requirement or a practice to hold a strike vote prior to striking, and there is no incentive to call a strike if workers don’t support it, as such a strike would fail.

Each of the foregoing bills fails to advance union members’ rights in any meaningful fashion, imposes by fiat changes to their democratically-adopted processes, and increases burdens on unions to the detriment of members’ priorities. We oppose these bills and urge you to oppose them as well.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jody Calemine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "J" and "C".

Jody Calemine
Director, Government Affairs