

Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act

Over the last 40 years, wages have stagnated for workers across the economy, while income has skyrocketed for CEOs and the wealthiest 1%. Since 1979, wages for the top 1% of earners have skyrocketed by 157.3%, while wages for the bottom 90% have risen by just 22.2% over that time.

This skyrocketing inequality is the result of a loss of bargaining power and the erosion of workers' ability to exercise their rights on the job. Since the early 1980s, the overall rate of unionization has declined in half. That decline creates problems for all workers, as higher union density increases wages for all workers. The drop in union membership also means that fewer workers have a meaningful voice on the job to fight for paid sick and family leave, safe working conditions, quality health care and more.

Weak laws protecting workers' rights to organize and negotiate for better wages and standards have played a major role in increasing inequality and putting workers at risk. Protecting workers' rights to organize by enacting *H.R. 842/S. 420, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act* will help restore worker power and create more good jobs across the country.

The PRO Act:

- ***Enacts meaningful penalties for illegally firing workers for union activity:*** The current penalty under the National Labor Relations Act for wrongfully firing a worker is back wages minus any wages earned in the interim. The PRO Act would authorize monetary penalties against law-breaking employers and create a private right of action for wronged workers to seek justice.
- ***Ends undemocratic “captive audience” meetings:*** Companies routinely hold mandatory meetings on work time in which executives and anti-union consultants threaten and intimidate workers seeking to organize into opposing a union—a practice that is generally completely legal. The PRO Act would ban these undemocratic meetings and would ensure that union representational elections are held in a timely and fair way.
- ***Strengthens workers' ability to stand in solidarity:*** The PRO Act would remove prohibitions on workers standing together to protect all workers' rights. Specifically, it would allow workers to engage in peaceful protest with workers at other companies. It would also prevent companies from permanently replacing workers who have gone on strike, a practice that puts workers who go on strike to protect their health, safety and other crucial needs at risk of losing their jobs simply for standing up for their rights.
- ***Helps workers who have organized get a fair first contract:*** Nearly half of newly formed unions fail to ever reach a first contract with an employer because companies will simply refuse to negotiate in good faith. The PRO Act would remedy this issue and facilitate first contracts by creating a process of mediation and arbitration to resolve disputes in a timely way.

It's time to pass the PRO Act and build power for working families!

CWA