

Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act of 2019 Will Strengthen Unions

By International Secretary-Treasurer
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It's getting harder and harder to make ends meet, as working peoples' wages remain stagnant while the rich get richer. In fact, between 1980 and 2014, income for the bottom half of earners grew by only one percent, while income for the top one percent of earners jumped by 205 percent, according to Vox Research.

During this same time period, the percentage of workers who belonged to a union dropped significantly, from 33 percent in 1956 to only 10 percent in 2018.

Coincidence? Not a chance.

The higher percentage of union workers there are in any given community, the better wages and benefits are for everyone – regardless of whether you're a union member. Behemoth, greedy corporations understand this, so they are paying off anti-union candidates, who in turn pass legislation that makes it harder and harder for workers to organize. The miserly top one percent wants to keep all the country's wealth to themselves, even though it's made off the backs of working people.

But there is new federal legislation that can reverse this vicious cycle of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

In May, the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act of 2019* was introduced by Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA-3) and Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA). The bill would eliminate right to work laws and modernize the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). It would strengthen the federal laws protecting a workers' right to organize a union and enact serious safeguards against corporate interference in organizing campaign.

Today, the NLRA doesn't completely protect workers from any employer reprisals when organizing or empower workers to enforce their labor rights in court. The PRO Act ensures that workers can actually exercise those rights by:

- Increasing penalties for employers that violate workers' rights.
- Strengthening support for workers who suffer retaliation for exercising their rights to organize.
- Preventing employers from interfering in union elections.

The PRO Act also strengthens workers' right to bargain at the negotiating table, because it:

- Enhances workers' right to support secondary boycotts, strikes or other acts of solidarity.
- Allows workers to engage in collective or class action litigation against employers who violate their workplace rights.
- Ensures unions can collect "fair share" fees (currently forbidden in Right-to-Work states).
- Facilitates initial collective bargaining agreements by mandating binding arbitration for first contracts if the parties cannot find agreement on their own.

The TWU will fight to make this legislation into law so that all our members have the actual right to organize and make their communities more prosperous.

For updates about this bill and any other legislation the TWU supports, please visit www.twu.org.

I hope you and your families have a happy, healthy and safe summer!



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