



FACT SHEET

Workforce Protections

Working people are frustrated that their wages lag behind while corporations and the wealthy continue to prosper. Experts agree that the erosion of unionization in the United States has played a major role in this trend. Forming a union and addressing wages through collective bargaining is the best way to raise workers' pay, and yet collective bargaining coverage in the United States has plunged behind every other industrialized nation.

The National Labor Relations Act protects the rights of private-sector workers—union and nonunion—to engage in collective, concerted activity with their co-workers to win improvements on the job like equal pay, scheduling flexibility, paid sick days, and training and promotional opportunities. But the legal playing field is slanted dramatically against working people who expect justice under this law. Penalties against employers who interfere with or retaliate against workers for exercising their rights are laughably weak and do not adequately protect workers' rights or deter employer law-breaking. And the years it can take to resolve an unfair labor practice under current procedures has proven the adage: justice delayed is justice denied.

The National Labor Relations Act needs to be strengthened so that workers' rights to engage in collective action to win improvements on the job get the same sort of protection as workers' civil rights, and so that employers who violate workers' rights face the same sorts of penalties as employers who pollute our environment or break civil rights laws. Working people deserve no less.

The Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act would:

- Provide for swift temporary reinstatement when workers are fired or retaliated against for exercising their rights to join together to seek improvements on the job.
- Strengthen the remedies for workers who are fired or retaliated against, and give workers the ability to bring their case directly to court.
- Establish strong penalties against employers who violate workers' rights.
- Provide real, meaningful, timely remedies when employers interfere with fair elections.
- Streamline the NLRB's processes.
- Improve workers' knowledge of their rights.

Status: S. 2143 introduced 11/16/17 and H.R. 4548 introduced 12/5/17.

Boilermakers' Message to Senators and Representatives: Co-sponsor and vote for S. 2143 and H.R. 4548, the *Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act*.