Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act

Unions are critical to reducing income inequality, rebuilding the middle class, and ensuring democracy in the workplace. On average, union workers earn 19 percent more than non-union workers, are over 18 percent more likely to have employer-provided health insurance, and over 22 percent more likely to have an employer-sponsored retirement plan. While union membership has gone down by some 50 percent over the past 40 years, income and wealth inequality has soared. While CEOs make almost 400 times more than the average employee, 63 percent of workers live paycheck to paycheck. The top one percent owns more wealth than the bottom 90 percent. Despite huge increases in technology and worker productivity, real weekly wages for average workers are nearly $50 lower today than they were 50 years ago.

Despite historic worker organizing over the past two years, many workers are not able to exercise their right to form and join unions as a result of broken and antiquated Federal labor laws. Companies employ aggressive union-busting tactics by holding captive audience meetings, retaliating against organizing workers, and firing union supporters. Further, the existing system for resolving labor law violations encourages them to delay compliance, resolution, and bargaining. Many companies decide breaking the law is cheaper than following it.

As workers stand up against corporate greed and fight for better wages, working conditions and benefits, Congress must make it easier for workers to form unions and receive a first contract. The PRO Act strengthens worker power and protects the right to join a union by:

Holding Companies Accountable for Violations of Workers' Rights

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) does not permit the National Labor Relations Board to adequately enforce the law and uphold workers' rights. In response, the PRO Act:

- Authorizes the NLRB to assess meaningful penalties for unfair labor practices by an employer
- Permits the Board to impose liability on corporate directors and officers who violate workers' rights
- Requires the NLRB to immediately seek an injunction to reinstate workers who are illegally discharged for exercising their rights while their case is pending
- Bans captive audience meetings
- Prevents employers from interfering in union elections
- Empowers the NLRB to require employers to bargain with the union when employers do interfere with fair union elections

Strengthening Workers' Right to Join Together and Negotiate for Better Working Conditions

- Facilitates timely first contracts between companies and newly-certified unions
- Bans companies from permanently replacing striking workers
- Ensures unions can collect fair-share fees to prevent free riders from benefitting from unions without paying their fair share of the costs of collective bargaining
- Enhances workers' right to support boycotts, strikes, or other acts of solidarity
- Affirms the NLRB's authority to protect workers' rights to have their day in court

Restoring Fairness to an Economy that is Rigged Against Workers

- Prevents employers from infringing on workers' right to organize by misclassifying workers as supervisors or independent contractors
- Ensures workers receive back pay and other remedies regardless of work authorization status
- Requires employers to inform workers of their rights under the NLRA
- Shines a light on employers' union-busting campaigns by requiring disclosure of contracts with anti-union consultants