



**Communications Workers of America**  
Chris Shelton | *President*

**Government Affairs Department**  
Dan Mauer | *Director*

June 13, 2022

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the officers and members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), I am writing to urge you to reach out to Senate leadership and express support to hold a vote on the PRO Act in the Senate.

The huge surge in economic inequality over the past quarter-century is related directly to many workers' lack of a strong voice on the job. Over that time, wages have stagnated for workers across the economy, while income has skyrocketed for CEOs and the wealthiest 1%. As of 2016, upper-income families had 7.4 times as much wealth as middle-income families and 75 times as much wealth as lower-income families. These ratios are up from 3.4 and 28 in 1983, respectively.

Over time, union density has declined substantially. In fact, the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) found that in 2019, only 1 in 9 U.S. workers were covered by a union contract, although a growing 48% of nonunion workers said they would vote to join a union if given the opportunity. The decline in unionization and decline in suppression of workers rights, harms workers who are unable to form unions directly, and also hurts other workers, as research by the EPI demonstrates that higher union density increases wages for all workers.

Moreover, the harm to workers caused by the lack of an organized voice on the job is not limited simply to compensation. Workers who form unions have stronger protections against discrimination and retaliation, enhanced job security, and better retirement benefits. In fact, 94% of unionized workers have access to employer-sponsored healthcare, compared to 68% of nonunion workers, 91% of unionized workers have access to paid sick days, compared to only 73% of nonunion workers, and unionized workers earn 11.2% more in wages than their nonunionized peers.

These problems have all been magnified by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. New research confirms that workers without union representation are less likely to have paid leave, to have access to proper PPE at work, or to have protections against unnecessary layoffs. Likely as a result of these dynamics, mortality rates from COVID-19 are significantly lower in unionized nursing homes.

Unfortunately, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) does not currently include protections strong enough to ensure that workers are able to effectively exercise their right to organize, bargain collectively, and have a strong voice on the job. The NLRA's penalties are ineffective and insufficient. As a result, workers are routinely illegally disciplined or even fired for exercising their NLRA rights, with little to no consequence for the bad actors. Because of this, many workers are deterred from exercising their rights in the first place.

Just as concerning is what is actually permitted under the NLRA. Employers can hold "captive audience" meetings, in which executives can and do force workers to attend hours-long meetings in which management berates and intimidates workers who want to organize. Employers can and do also fail to negotiate fair first contracts, preventing workers who form unions from ever securing a collective bargaining agreement. As a result, many workers are deterred from fighting to exercise their rights in the first place.

The PRO Act strengthens the NLRA and, in so doing, empowers workers across the country. The PRO Act:

- Strengthens remedies for workers who face illegal retaliation, including swift temporary reinstatement for workers who are illegally suspended or fired, real financial penalties, and the clarification of their ability to have their day in court;
- Protects the integrity of union elections against coercive captive audience meetings;
- Clarifies coverage of the NLRA to prevent the misclassification of workers as independent contractors;
- Ensures that the National Labor Relations Board's orders are enforced in a timely manner;
- Protects workers' right to strike for basic workplace improvements, including by making it an unfair labor practice for employers to promise to, threaten to, or take action to permanently replace strikers;
- Ensures that workers and employers are able to reach fair deals for a first contract by establishing mediation and arbitration procedures;
- Allows for the union representation election votes to occur electronically, by mail, in person at the employees' worksite, or in person at another location;
- Safeguards the rights of all workers to engage in employment-related class action litigation.

The PRO Act would ensure that workers' right to a voice on the job is protected, combat skyrocketing economic inequality, and strengthen the middle class. It has already passed the House of Representatives. Now is the time for our allies in the Senate to fight for a vote and ensure that the anti-democratic filibuster can't be used to block workers' right to democracy in the workplace. It's been hard working families that've carried us through pandemics, recessions, and a climate crisis; protecting their right to organize is the least they deserve. Therefore, I strongly urge you to push Senate leadership for a floor vote for the PRO Act. When the bill reaches the Senate floor, I urge you to vote in favor and oppose any actions or amendments that would undermine the bill's protections.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dan Mauer  
Director of Government Affairs  
Communications Workers of America