



June 29, 2017

Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I strongly urge you to oppose three anti-worker bills that will come before your committee this week: the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017 (H.R. 986), the Workforce Democracy and Fairness Act (H.R. 2776) and the Employee Privacy Protection Act (H.R. 2775).

These three proposals represent the most recent attempts to harm American workers, stripping their rights as employees by denying or reversing long-standing National Labor Relations Act protections and laws.

The Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act seeks to deny NLRA protections to workers who are employed by tribal-owned and -operated enterprises located on Native American lands. Historically, this type of legislation would have affected employees who work in the gaming industry. Today, however, employers on Native American lands also include mining operations, power plants, smoke shops, saw mills, construction companies, ski resorts, high-tech firms, hotels and spas. As written, H.R. 986 would strip all workers in these enterprises of their NLRA rights and protections, as well as some 600,000 tribal casino workers, the vast majority of whom are not Native Americans.

The AFT represents thousands of employees in the Bureau of Indian Education schools, and we respect the principles of sovereignty for tribal governments and self-determination of Native Americans. However, we do not believe these principles should be used to deny workers their collective bargaining rights. Workers' rights are human rights, and every worker deserves these rights to be upheld and respected.

The AFT also opposes the Workplace Democracy and Fairness Act, which would make it difficult for workers to exercise their right to form a union and collectively bargain with their employers. It seeks to reverse important elements of the National Labor Relations Board's election procedures by imposing new requirements that would unduly complicate and delay this process. Specifically, the bill would require the NLRB to wait two weeks before holding a pre-election hearing and would prohibit elections from being held sooner than 35 days, or five weeks, after filing an election petition. Ultimately, H.R. 2776 would lead to lengthy hearings that delay elections. Moreover, it would invite employers to litigate issues and would reverse provisions in the April 2015 election rules designed to streamline and shorten hearings.

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

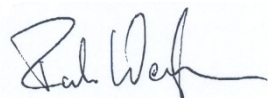


Finally, the AFT opposes the Employee Privacy Protection Act. By allowing employers to submit employee voter lists to the NLRB rather than sending them directly to the union electronically, this bill would overturn the NLRB's election rule that ensures unions have timely access to these lists. This maneuver has no other purpose than to allow employers to set up barriers against union supporters by creating delays and limits to their to important employee contact information. Currently, the NLRB's rules require employers to provide employee information, including available telephone numbers and email addresses, within two business days after a bargaining unit has been determined. If H.R. 2775 is enacted, employers would be required to provide only one form of employee contact information, and they would be allowed to wait seven days after the bargaining unit is determined to send the list, further delaying the process. We believe this bill directly undermines the ability of union supporters to talk with employees, while doing nothing to rein in an employer's anti-union campaigning.

Taken together, this package of bills represents another disingenuous attempt to undermine rights and protections afforded to American workers. Stripping these safeguards, under the guise of democracy, fairness or even sovereignty, is an insult both to today's workers and to those courageous workers who originally fought to secure these protections.

We urge you to vote NO on these misguided bills. Thank you for your consideration of our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "W".

Randi Weingarten
President

RW:emc opeiu#2 afl-cio