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INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF THEATRICAL STAGE EMPLOYEES, MOVING PICTURE TECHNICIANS,
ARTISTS AND ALLIED CRAFTS OF THE UNITED STATES, ITS TERRITORIES AND CANADA

March 8, 2021

Re: H.R. 842, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act

Dear Representative:

I write to you on behalf of the over 127,000 American members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) to urge you to support H.R. 842, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, and to oppose any weakening amendments or motion to recommit when the U.S. House of Representatives considers the bill this week.

The IATSE proudly represents behind-the-scenes workers in all forms of live theater, motion picture and television production, trade shows and exhibitions, television broadcasting, and concerts, as well as the equipment and construction shops that support these areas of the entertainment industry. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has put millions out of work and threatens the safety of countless others. Over the course of the last year, we have seen that belonging to a union can, quite literally, be the difference between life and death on the job. The time to act is now.

Labor unions are under assault, with policies across the country undermining workers' collective bargaining rights and stripping union workers of the wages, benefits, and retirement security they deserve. The PRO Act would help level the playing field in an economy pillaged by inequality and anti-worker legislation and would make the freedom to negotiate collectively a reality for millions of American workers.

The PRO Act, which passed the House with bipartisan support last year, will restore the original intent of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), which was to give working people a voice on the job so they can negotiate for higher wages, better benefits, a safe workplace and protection against discrimination.

Among its key provisions, the PRO Act gives the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) authority to ensure employers not only negotiate in good faith but incur financial and legal penalties for union-busting. The status quo gives employers perverse incentives to lie, threaten, and coerce workers out of joining a union. They routinely fire union supporters and force workers to attend mandatory "captive audience meetings" where they slander union membership.

Too often, when workers choose to form a union, employers stall the bargaining process to avoid reaching an agreement. The PRO Act would establish a process for mediation and arbitration to help the parties achieve a first contract. Employers would also be prohibited from hiding behind subcontractors, or deliberately misclassifying employees as independent contractors, to evade their responsibilities of providing a livable wage, health benefits, or safe work environment.

The bill protects the right to strike and makes it illegal for bosses to fire and replace workers who walk off the job in protest of better conditions. Workers must be allowed to picket and withhold their labor in order to have the power necessary to improve their workplaces.

Finally, this crucial piece of legislation eliminates the "right-to-work" laws of the Jim Crow era that enable union "free riders" and ultimately put lives at risk. Each year, dubious special interest groups and their billionaire funders push these laws to give corporations even greater



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power at the expense of American workers. The last seven decades have shown that people in states with right-to-work laws receive lower wages and reduced access to quality health care and retirement security.

The passage of the PRO Act is an important step to rebuilding America's working class, not just from the policy failures of the last few decades, but also the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis has shown the importance of having a voice in the workplace and support for labor unions is at a historic high. Recent studies have found that nearly half of all nonunion workers, more than 60 million people, would join a union today if given the chance. This is that chance. That is why I urge you to support the PRO Act when it comes before you for a vote on the House floor.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. Please contact Tyler McIntosh, Political/Legislative Director at tmcintosh@iatse.net to engage further on this issue.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Loeb
International President

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts is a labor organization representing over 150,000 members working in all forms of live theater, motion picture and television production, trade shows and exhibitions, television broadcasting, and concerts as well as the equipment and construction shops that support all these areas of the entertainment industry. We represent virtually all the behind-the-scenes workers in crafts ranging from motion picture animator to theater usher. To learn more, visit <https://www.iatse.net/>.