**Testimony of Greg Mourad**
**Vice President, National Right to Work Committee**
**Before the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions**
**Committee on Education and Workforce**
**U.S. House of Representatives**
**Hearing: “Out of Touch: When Union Politics Leave Workers Behind”**
**September 15, 2026**

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Chairman Allen, Ranking Member DeSaulnier, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today. My name is Greg Mourad, and I am Vice President of the National Right to Work Committee, a nonpartisan citizens’ coalition of employees, employers, and concerned citizens. We have one purpose: ending compulsory unionism. We believe no worker should be forced to join a union, and no worker should be forced to pay a union, just to get or keep a job.

The title of this hearing puts it well. Union politics have left workers far behind. That did not happen by accident. It happened because the people who run America’s largest unions answer to almost no one — and least of all to the workers whose money they spend.

My message today is simple. Union officials have taken two extraordinary powers that government handed them — the power to speak for every worker in a workplace as the monopoly bargaining agent, and the power to collect dues or fees as a condition of employment — and they have turned those powers into a political machine. Over the last two years that machine has been attacking the agenda American voters chose in 2024. And millions of those Americans were the workers forced to fund the attacks.

I want to show the Subcommittee four things: how far the union hierarchy has drifted from the workers it claims to represent; what it has been spending their money to fight; why this arrangement was a mistake from the beginning; and the one reform that fixes it.

## I. The union hierarchy and the workers are not the same people

Let’s start with how working Americans actually voted.

In 2024, union households split roughly down the middle. By the national exit poll, President Trump carried about 45% of voters from union households.[1] Among rank-and-file Teamsters, Trump support was even stronger. The union’s own membership poll found that a clear majority — nearly 60% — wanted the Teamsters to endorse

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[1] CNN, 2024 National Exit Poll (Edison Research for the National Election Pool), national results, “President — Union household,” https://www.cnn.com/election/2024/exit-polls/national-results/general/president/0 (President Trump won about 45% of voters from union households).

President Trump, while about a third supported his opponent.[2] The Teamsters, for the first time in decades, made no presidential endorsement at all.

But look at where the union hierarchy put their members' money.

By their own reports to the U.S. Department of Labor, unions spent roughly $1.8 billion on politics and lobbying in the 2023–2024 election cycle.[3] Almost none of that was voluntary money. The overwhelming majority came from dues and fees that workers had to pay. And it flowed in one direction: the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) sent about 99% of their candidate contributions to one political party.[4] The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) gave Republican candidates about $6,000 — out of tens of millions of dollars in political spending.[5] The numbers were similar across the vast majority of unions.

Put those two facts together. A unionized electrician, teacher, or nurse who voted for this administration had part of every paycheck taken, without consent, and spent on the campaign against the President he had just helped elect.

Nor is there any real path for an employee to opt out of union political spending. In practice, for a private sector worker in one of the 24 states without a Right to Work law, the limited provisions that exist are narrow, buried in fine print, incomplete, and often enforceable only by hiring a lawyer. In the meantime, objecting workers still must pay the union for its so-called "representation" as a condition of keeping their jobs — and watch that union spend the money on a political agenda they abhor.

Union officials obstruct even the workers whose rights are clearest. Jessica Haefner works at a Kroger near Houston, in Right to Work Texas, where no worker can be forced to pay a union at all. When she asked how to decline dues, a union agent told her to write "$0" on the membership form. She did — and later discovered that the union had changed the "$0" to a dollar figure and started taking money out of her paycheck.[6] If

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[2] International Brotherhood of Teamsters, "Teamsters Release Presidential Endorsement Polling Data" (Sept. 2024) (national electronic poll of members: 59.6% favored endorsing Trump, 34% Harris). The Teamsters made no presidential endorsement in 2024, the first time in decades.

[3] National Institute for Labor Relations Research, "Big Labor Political Spending on the 2023–2024 Political Cycle" (Dec. 2025), analyzing unions' LM-2 reports filed with the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Labor-Management Standards.

[4] Commonwealth Foundation, "Government Unions Spent $915 Million on Politics in 2024" (Dec. 8, 2025) (NEA and AFT directed roughly 99% of candidate contributions to Democrats; the bulk of the total was funded from dues).

[5] *Id.*; see also OpenSecrets, AFSCME 2023–2024 cycle summary. AFSCME's regulated contributions and outside spending exceeded $25 million, of which roughly $6,000 went to Republican candidates.

[6] Charge of Jessica Haefner against UFCW Local 455, filed with the National Labor Relations Board, Region 16 (Fort Worth/Houston) (Feb. 2023), alleging that a union agent instructed her to enter "$0" in the dues field of a membership form and that the union then altered the entry to authorize dues deductions;

that is how union officials treat a worker who has the protection of a state Right to Work law, imagine how they treat one who does not.

This is not an abstraction. Consider Charlene Carter, a Southwest Airlines flight attendant. She had resigned her union membership years earlier, when she learned where her dues were going, but as an airline employee she was still forced to pay fees to the Transport Workers Union (TWU).[7] In 2017, she objected — in messages to her union president — to the union spending money to send officials and flight attendants to a march in Washington against the newly elected President.[8] The union pressed Southwest to fire her, and Southwest did. It took Charlene Carter eight years and a trip to the Fifth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals to be vindicated.[9] That is what it looks like when union politics leave a worker behind.

So when this Subcommittee hears that "labor" has taken a position, the fair question is: whose position? The union leadership's — or that of the half or more of the rank and file who disagree?

Here is what the union hierarchy has spent the last two years fighting.

## II. What the union hierarchy has been spending workers' money to fight

### A. Clinging to monopoly bargaining power in the federal government

On March 27, 2025, the President signed Executive Order 14251. It used the national-security exclusion that Congress itself wrote into the Civil Service Reform Act[10] to end union monopoly bargaining at agencies whose work touches national security — some 40 agencies and subdivisions, and more than 950,000 federal employees.[11]

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Haefner was represented by National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation staff attorneys. Texas is a Right to Work state.

[7] *Carter v. Transport Workers Union of America, Local 556 & Southwest Airlines Co.*, No. 3:17-cv-02278 (N.D. Tex.). Carter resigned her union membership in 2013 but, as an employee covered by the Railway Labor Act, remained obligated to pay agency fees to Local 556.

[8] Carter's 2017 messages to Local 556 President Audrey Stone objected to the union's use of funds to send officers and members to the January 2017 Women's March in Washington, D.C.; Southwest terminated her in March 2017 at the union's urging.

[9] *Carter v. Southwest Airlines Co.*, No. 23-10536 (5th Cir. May 8, 2025) (affirming the Railway Labor Act verdict against Southwest and the TWU; vacating the Title VII religious-accommodation relief and the district court's order requiring Southwest to conduct religious-liberty training). A 2022 jury awarded $5.1 million, reduced under statutory caps; Carter was reinstated with seniority, and a satisfaction of judgment filed in April 2026 recorded a payment of $946,102.87.

[10] 5 U.S.C. § 7103(b)(1).

[11] Exec. Order No. 14251, "Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs" (Mar. 27, 2025); Cong. Rsch. Serv., LSB11367, "National Security Exclusions from the Federal Service Labor-

The order was the right thing to do. A union sitting at the bargaining table with a federal agency holds, in practice, a veto over how the elected Administration runs that agency — what its policies are, how its people are assigned, how fast it can move. When the same union is simultaneously suing that Administration on a dozen fronts, “bargaining” is no longer bargaining. It is obstruction with a legal seat at the table. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit allowed the order to take effect, concluding that the President would have taken the same action regardless of any motive anyone wished to ascribe to him.[12]

The National Right to Work Foundation filed a brief in support of the order and urged that the exclusion be extended across the entire federal government.[13]

But the union response is the main point. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE), the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), AFSCME, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the AFL-CIO all went to court, arguing — in almost these words — that the order is retaliation for their litigation campaign against the Administration.[14] They have also pressed Congress to overturn the order by statute and restore the monopoly bargaining power the President took away.

The AFL-CIO’s president described the exclusions as “punishment for unions who are leading the fight against the administration’s illegal actions in court — and a blatant attempt to silence us.”[15] That is a candid admission that Big Labor had already been fighting against the many priorities of the Trump Administration — and against the millions of union members who voted for it. It is not a description of collective bargaining over wages and working conditions. It is a description of a political operation — and a request that Congress protect it by statute.

The fight over federal bargaining is among the clearest cases because it is among the most naked. But the same pattern — union power turned to ends the members never chose — runs through the private sector and across nearly every issue in the news.

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Management Relations Statutes.” Together with a companion order, EO 14251 excludes roughly 40 agencies and subdivisions and more than 950,000 federal employees.

[12] *American Federation of Government Employees v. Trump*, No. 25-4014 (9th Cir. Feb. 26, 2026) (vacating the preliminary injunction) (“the government has shown that the President would have taken the same action even in the absence of the protected conduct”; the order “discloses no retaliatory animus on its face”). The decision is interlocutory; the Ninth Circuit issued its mandate in June 2026.

[13] National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, amicus curiae brief in *NTEU v. Trump* (D.C. Cir., filed Sept. 18, 2025); statement of Foundation President Mark Mix.

[14] *National Treasury Employees Union v. Trump*, No. 1:25-cv-00935 (D.D.C., filed Mar. 31, 2025); *American Federation of Government Employees v. Trump*, No. 3:25-cv-03698 (N.D. Cal., filed Apr. 3, 2025 by six unions); *AFL-CIO v. Trump* (D.D.C.). The complaints allege First Amendment retaliation and violations of the Administrative Procedure Act.

[15] Statement of AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler (Mar. 27, 2025) (“AFL-CIO President on Federal Collective Bargaining Executive Order: ‘Very Definition of Union-Busting’”).

## B. The President's budget

When Congress passed the President's 2025 tax-relief and budget law, AFSCME — a union of 1.3 million public employees — held rallies in cities across the country against it and pledged to "call out" the members of Congress who voted for it.[16] AFGE lobbied to strip provisions out of both the House and Senate versions.[17]

That is a fight over federal tax and spending priorities — a matter for the people's elected representatives, not for a labor organization. A dues-paying worker who supported the law nonetheless found that his money had bought a lobbyist on the other side of it.

## C. Immigration enforcement

When federal agents carried out an immigration-enforcement operation in Los Angeles in June 2025 and arrested the president of SEIU California, David Huerta, the AFL-CIO responded by organizing demonstrations in cities across the country.[18]

SEIU, the AFT, National Nurses United, and other unions then became turnout organizations for the so-called "No Kings" protests in October 2025.[19] The NEA's 2025 delegate assembly adopted business items committing the union to oppose the

Administration's immigration enforcement, including as it affects students and schools.[20]

Enforcing the immigration laws is the work of the elected government. It is not a term or condition of any member's employment. Members' money paid for the organizing all the same.

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[16] American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, member actions opposing the 2025 reconciliation law's Medicaid and SNAP provisions (2025) (e.g., "AFSCME working and retiree members call out politicians who gutted life-saving programs").

[17] American Federation of Government Employees, legislative advocacy against provisions of the 2025 budget-reconciliation bill (2025).

[18] David Huerta, President of SEIU California, was arrested and charged by federal authorities in connection with an immigration-enforcement operation in Los Angeles in June 2025. AFL-CIO, "AFL-CIO Demands Immediate Release of SEIU California President David Huerta" (June 9, 2025) (announcing demonstrations in cities nationwide).

[19] "No Kings" nationwide demonstrations, Oct. 18, 2025; turnout organized in part by SEIU, the American Federation of Teachers, and National Nurses United.

[20] National Education Association, 2025 Representative Assembly, adopted new business items, including measures directed at the Administration's immigration-enforcement actions affecting students and schools.

## D. Education policy — and the reflex

The NEA and the AFT sued to stop the Administration's reorganization of the U.S. Department of Education.[21] The AFT filed additional suits over school-grant funding and the administration of student loans.[22] And at its 2025 assembly, the NEA's delegates formally resolved — in New Business Item 60 — "to defend democracy against Trump's embrace of fascism by using the term *facism* [sic] in NEA materials to correctly characterize Donald Trump's program and actions."[23]

Consider just one example. When the President nominated Lori Chavez-DeRemer to be Secretary of Labor — a nominee the Teamsters had recommended, and one whose record in Congress the teacher unions themselves said they admired — the NEA still could not manage a civil word for the President who made the pick. It used the announcement to declare that this Administration was pursuing an "extreme" agenda that would "diminish the voice of working people."[24] When even the nomination of someone you like becomes an occasion to attack the President, that is not a policy disagreement. It is a reflex. And it is financed with dues confiscated from working men and women who would be fired if they did not pay.

## E. Foreign policy

At its national convention in June 2026, the AFL-CIO — the country's largest labor federation — adopted a resolution demanding "an immediate and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza and "a halt to arms transfers" by the United States government.[25]

Directing the arms-export and foreign policy of the United States is no part of representing a teacher or a nurse. The union hierarchy spends members' money on it regardless — and a member who wants no part of it will find that the union has made saying so as difficult as it can.

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[21] *NAACP v. United States*, No. 8:25-cv-00965 (D. Md., filed Mar. 24, 2025) (plaintiffs include the NEA, a local NEA affiliate, and AFSCME Maryland Council 3; challenging the reorganization of the U.S. Department of Education); see also *New York v. McMahon* (D. Mass. 2025).

[22] *American Federation of Teachers v. U.S. Department of Education*, No. 1:25-cv-00802 (D.D.C., filed Mar. 18, 2025) (income-driven repayment and Public Service Loan Forgiveness; a settlement was reached in October 2025); *American Federation of Teachers v. U.S. Department of Education* (challenging the termination of Full-Service Community Schools grants, filed 2025).

[23] National Education Association, 2025 Representative Assembly (Portland, Ore., July 3–6, 2025), New Business Item 60 (as adopted). The resolution's text incorrectly spells the word "fascism" as "facism." See also NBI 66 (opposing closure of the U.S. Department of Education).

[24] Statement of NEA President Becky Pringle on the nomination of Lori Chavez-DeRemer as Secretary of Labor (Feb. 2025) (praising her congressional record and describing the Administration's agenda as "extreme" and one that would "diminish the voice of working people"). Chavez-DeRemer had cosponsored the "PRO Act" and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act while serving in the House.

[25] AFL-CIO, Resolution 9, adopted at the 30th Constitutional Convention, Minneapolis (June 7–10, 2026), demanding "an immediate and permanent ceasefire" in Gaza and "a halt to arms transfers."

## F. And the rest

There is more. Unions sued to block the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) from accessing federal data systems at the Treasury, the Social Security Administration, and the Department of Education.[26] They sued over reductions in force. They protested loudly when the President removed the General Counsel and a Member of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) — officials the President is entitled to remove.[27] By its own count, the largest federal-employee union had filed roughly 18 separate lawsuits against the Administration by the middle of 2025.[28]

## G. The bills Big Labor is pushing

Union officials are also pressing Congress for two pieces of legislation.

The first, which its backers call the "PRO Act," would wipe out every state Right to Work law in the country and expand in nearly every way imaginable the power of union officials to force workers into their dues-paying ranks, whether those workers want it or not.[29]

The second would empower a panel of federal bureaucrats to impose a first contract on an employer and its employees who never agreed to its terms, and to bar any appeal for two years. It is a single job-destroying measure carved out of the "PRO Act" as a standalone bill and given the name "Faster Labor Contracts Act."[30]

Both are squarely at odds with the President's goal of a stronger economy and more American jobs. Both would drag down private sector workers and small businesses under "contract" terms dictated by bureaucrats who don't understand their business or their market, and who suffer no consequences when the business goes under and its employees lose their jobs.

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[26] *American Federation of Teachers v. Bessent* (D. Md. 2025) and related suits challenging Department of Government Efficiency access to Treasury, Social Security Administration, and Department of Education data systems (filed Feb. 2025).

[27] President Trump removed NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo and Board Member Gwynne Wilcox on Jan. 27, 2025. The President's authority under Article II to remove the officers who run executive agencies is well founded, and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation has argued in related litigation that the statutory restriction on removing NLRB members is unconstitutional. The Supreme Court has allowed the removal to remain in effect. See *Trump v. Wilcox*, 605 U.S. ___ (2025).

[28] American Federation of Government Employees, "Summary of AFGE Lawsuits against Trump & How Litigation Works" (2025) (roughly 18 suits filed by mid-2025).

[29] H.R. 20, "Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize Act," 119th Cong. (Rep. Robert C. Scott), and its Senate companion.

[30] H.R. 5408 and S. 844, "Faster Labor Contracts Act," 119th Cong.

## III. Why this was a mistake — in every workplace

How did union officials come to hold this kind of power in the first place — over the government, and over private workplaces? They were given it. And it was a mistake. Wherever the law lets a union speak for workers who never chose it and bill workers who never wanted it, three things follow. It is bad in principle, bad in its politics, and bad in its policy.

**Bad in principle.** No American should be forced to accept a spokesman he did not choose, or made to pay an organization for permission to earn a living. A criminal defendant is entitled to pick his own lawyer. A worker under monopoly bargaining is not even allowed that.

Thomas Jefferson wrote that "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves and abhors, is sinful and tyrannical."[31] He was writing about religion, but the principle carries: it is wrong to make a citizen bankroll advocacy he opposes.

When the "employer" is the government, it is even worse. Forced bargaining hands one private organization a legal claim on public policy and the public treasury that no voter and no taxpayer has. Franklin Roosevelt — no enemy of organized labor — told the federal employee unions in 1937 that "the process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be transplanted into the public service," because "[t]he employer is the whole people, who speak by means of laws enacted by their representatives."[32] George Meany, the first president of the AFL-CIO, said in 1955 that "it is impossible to bargain collectively with the government."[33] A federal court that upheld North Carolina's law against government collective bargaining warned that as public employees gain power this way, "other interest groups with a right to a voice in the running of the government may be left out of vital political decisions."[34]

**Bad in its politics.** Forced dues build a political war chest that answers to the officials who control it, not to the members who fund it — $1.8 billion in the last cycle, the bulk of it from mandatory payments, overwhelmingly to one side of our politics. The members who disagreed had no say. And in the government context, the same unions spend that money to elect the very officials who then sit across the bargaining table from them. They negotiate, in effect, with themselves — at the public's expense.

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[31] Thomas Jefferson, A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom (drafted 1777, introduced 1779), enacted as the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom (1786).

[32] Letter from President Franklin D. Roosevelt to Luther C. Steward, President, National Federation of Federal Employees (Aug. 16, 1937).

[33] George Meany, article in *The New York Times Magazine* (Dec. 4, 1955).

[34] *Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Unit of the North Carolina Ass'n of Educators v. Phillips*, 381 F. Supp. 644, 647 (M.D.N.C. 1974) (three-judge court) (upholding N.C. Gen. Stat. § 95-98, which voids collective bargaining agreements between North Carolina governmental units and labor unions).

**Bad in its policy.** In the private sector, jobs and working families have moved for decades from forced-dues states to Right to Work states, and population has followed the jobs. Monopoly bargaining strips the individual worker of a voice and shields the incompetent and the abusive from accountability. In the public sector, the states that went furthest — California, Illinois — now carry pension debts and work rules that have put their budgets on a path toward insolvency. And when elected officials try to change course, government unions strike — against the voters and the families who depend on the service.

Executive Order 14251 began, in one corner of the government, to undo this. Big Labor opposes it fiercely. The "PRO Act," and the forced-contract bill carved out of it, would push monopoly bargaining far deeper into the private sector. Every expansion of monopoly bargaining is a step in the wrong direction.

Congress should also decline any invitation to force monopoly bargaining onto state and local governments. Some states bar government collective bargaining entirely; others have pulled it back. That is their right — and the states that have done so are better off for it.

## IV. The remedy: make it voluntary

Every problem I have described traces to a single root: a worker can be forced to pay. Remove the force, and union officials have to earn their members' support again.

The National Right to Work Act (H.R. 1232) would do exactly that. It repeals the provisions of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and the Railway Labor Act (RLA) that permit a worker to be fired for declining to pay a union. It does nothing else. It takes away no one's right to join a union, to organize, or to bargain collectively. It has been introduced in both chambers, and 151 Members of the House and Senate have signed on.[35]

Let me be plain about how the current system actually works.

The twin pillars of union power are monopoly bargaining and forced dues. Union officials first impose their so-called "representation" on independent-minded workers who never asked for it — and then demand that those same workers pay for this "representation" they do not want, did not request, and believe they would be better off without.

And the union czars do this by choice. Federal law does not require a union to represent non-members. Any union is free to bargain for its members only. Yet union officials routinely ignore that option and seize monopoly power anyway, for the leverage it gives them. Then, rubbing salt in the wound, they point to the workers whose right to self-

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[35] "National Right to Work Act," 119th Cong.: S. 533 (Sen. Rand Paul), with 23 cosponsors, and H.R. 1232 (Rep. Joe Wilson), with 126 cosponsors — 151 sponsors and cosponsors combined. Source: Congress.gov cosponsor listings for S. 533 and H.R. 1232.

representation they have just stripped away, and demand a portion of their paycheck in the name of an Orwellian redefinition of the word “fairness.”

The NLRA even tells workers, in Section 7, that they have the right to “refrain from” union activities — and then takes it back in the same sentence, continuing, “except to the extent” they can be forced to pay union dues under a union contract.[36] Congress can and should strike that exception, leaving the unadulterated right to refrain.

Union officials know the argument for forced dues is an argument based on their own wants and needs, not on any valid principle. Robert Reich, President Clinton’s Secretary of Labor, put it plainly: unions “have got to have some ability to strap their members to the mast,” to “hold their members’ feet to the fire.”[37] Gary Casteel, then the second-ranking officer of the Auto Workers, put forward the better case: Right to Work, he said, actually helps a union, because “if you don’t think the system’s earning its keep, then you don’t have to pay.”[38]

The public has been clear about this for a long time. National polling consistently finds that more than 80% of Americans — and nearly 80% of union members — believe no worker should be forced to join or pay a union to get or keep a job.[39]

Samuel Gompers, the founder of the American Federation of Labor, said it best: “No lasting gain has ever come from compulsion.”[40]

## V. Recommendations

I respectfully urge the Subcommittee and the Congress to:

1. **Pass the National Right to Work Act,** and make union support a voluntary choice for every American worker.
2. **Reject any future demands from the union hierarchy that Congress reimpose the monopoly bargaining power curtailed by Executive Order 14251.** A union that is fighting an administration in court should not also hold a bargaining veto over it.

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[36] 29 U.S.C. § 157.

[37] Robert B. Reich, quoted by the Associated Press (1985); see National Right to Work Committee, compilation of union-official statements on compulsory dues.

[38] Gary Casteel, then Secretary-Treasurer of the United Auto Workers, quoted in *The Washington Post* (2014).

[39] National Right to Work Committee, “Voters Overwhelmingly Support Right to Work” (reporting a Rasmussen Reports / RMG Research national survey of 1,000 registered voters, released Aug. 29, 2024): 82% agreed that “workers should never be forced to join a union or pay dues to a union as a condition of employment,” including 79% of actively employed union members.

[40] Samuel Gompers, “Not Even Compulsory Benevolence Will Do,” *American Federationist*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Jan. 1917), p. 47.

3. **Oppose the so-called "PRO Act" and the forced-contract bill carved out of it —** the misnamed "Faster Labor Contracts Act" — and any measure that forces representation or a contract on workers and employers who never agreed to it.

4. **Reject any federal mandate of state or local government monopoly bargaining.** Leave that choice to the states.

Thank you. I look forward to your questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Mourad, Vice President, National Right to Work Committee