



Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 6238)

Fact Sheet

Just hours after the Supreme Court's decision in *Janus v. AFSCME*, which undermined public-sector workers in their fight for decent pay and fair workplaces, Democrats responded by introducing the *Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act*.

The *Public Service Freedom to Negotiate* guarantees that every public service employee in every state has the freedom to stand together and negotiate for fair wages and working conditions.

- The bill sets a minimum nationwide standard for collective bargaining rights that all states must provide to public sector workers.
- Among these standards, public employers are required to recognize employees' labor unions that are freely chosen by a majority of the employees voting, and to bargain with the labor organization over wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment.
- In states that fail to meet these standards, the bill gives the federal government the authority to intervene on behalf of public-service workers and ensure their rights to form a union and negotiate with their employer are protected.

The *Public Service Freedom to Negotiate* gives states the flexibility to write and administer their own labor laws.

- The bill offers states wide flexibility to write and administer their own labor laws that are tailored to the unique needs of their workforce, as long as they meet the minimum standards.
- The bill will not apply to states that provide public employees with collective bargaining rights that meet or exceed the minimum federal standard. It does not override state laws prohibiting strikes by police and emergency personnel.
- The bill is based on the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2007, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support (314-97).

Unions are proven to improve the quality of life for workers and their families through higher wages and better access to medical benefits, paid family leave, and retirement security.

- Union members employed by a state government earn 17 percent more than their non-union counterparts. Union members employed by a local government earn 35 percent more than their non-union counterparts.
- Public service workers are frequently underpaid despite the value they provide to our communities. For example, adjusted for inflation, public-school teacher wages dropped \$30 per week from 1996-2015.