

# UNITEHERE!

Office of The President  
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Dear Representative:

UNITE HERE represents over 275,000 hardworking men and women in the hospitality industry and strongly urges you to oppose the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act (H.R. 986).

Like most Americans, our members have a deep respect for Native Americans and their role in shaping our nation. Our members also have a deep and abiding respect for the rights of American workers and to uphold the laws that govern our nation and all of its citizens.

This brings me to H.R. 986. This bill would exempt all businesses owned and operated by Indian nations from the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Tribal businesses, including but not limited to Indian-owned casinos, have workforces and customers that are almost all non-Indian. If this bill were to become law, American citizens working for Native American businesses would lose their U.S. rights under the NLRA, including “full freedom of association” and “self-organization” without “discrimination.” Over the last 30 years, as Indian enterprises entered the stream of interstate commerce, a number of federal laws protecting the workplace have been applied to Indian businesses: Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA), Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Congress should not treat the rights Americans have under the NLRA any differently than these other important laws that protect American workers.

Much has been made of the need for this bill to give tribal governments “parity” with state and local governments. This comparison is misleading, if not absurd. States and local governments do not typically operate multi-billion dollar commercial enterprises. States and local governments do not typically run enterprises where the overwhelming majority of the government’s employees are from outside of their jurisdiction and the overwhelming majority of customers are also from outside of their jurisdiction. In a state or locality, if the citizens who live there don’t like the government’s policies, they can vote for people to change those policies. The non-tribal employees and customers have no meaningful way to influence tribal policies.

In this time of incredible income inequality in our country, Congress should be working to expand the rights of American workers, not finding ways to take them away. H.R. 986 is no different than the laws signed by Governors Scott Walker (R-WI) and Rick Snyder (R-MI): they attack the basic rights of workers to organize and collectively bargain.

Please stand up for American workers and join our union to oppose H.R. 986.

Sincerely,



D. Taylor

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D. TAYLOR, PRESIDENT

GENERAL OFFICERS: Gwen Mills, Secretary-Treasurer • Peter Ward, Recording Secretary  
Jo Marie Agriesti, General Vice President • Maria Elena Durazo, General Vice President for Immigration, Civil Rights and Diversity