

Congress Must Pass the Protect America's Workforce Act to Restore Collective Bargaining Rights to all Federal Workers

Transportation labor urges Congress to immediately pass *H.R. 2550, the Protect America's Workforce Act*. This bipartisan legislation is led by Representatives Jared Golden (D-ME-2) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA-1) and aims to reverse the Executive Order issued on March 27, 2025, titled "*Exclusions from Federal Labor-Management Relations Programs*." This Executive Order stripped collective bargaining rights from 1.5 million federal employees across all federal agencies. Labor historian Joseph A. McCartin, a Georgetown University history professor, called this executive order "by far the largest single act of union busting in American history" as it undermines workers' rights to collectively negotiate for better wages and working conditions, ultimately preventing employees from utilizing the basic constitutional rights enjoyed by workers in the private sector and other parts of public of the public sector. The order affects federal employees across various agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Commerce.

Federal government employees play a crucial role in serving the public every day, often without everyday Americans realizing the significant impact many public services in the federal government have on their daily lives. These workers have critical jobs, including those who ensure our transportation systems are safe and operational for commuters; investigators who analyze accidents to prevent future occurrences; inspectors who guarantee that essential goods can be transported safely to our communities; those who oversee critical weather forecasts for daily passenger flight operations; and even civilian mariners who protect our national security by providing necessary supplies and equipment to U.S. military missions around the world, just to name a few.

The current administration vigorously pursued changes to reshape its workforce through employee buyouts, early retirement offers, and even the dismantling of entire agencies. Since January of this year, tens of thousands of federal jobs have been eliminated, thousands of probationary employees have faced layoffs or received termination notices, thousands remain on administrative leave, and over 75,000 workers across all agencies have taken deferred resignations. Those who continue to work at government agencies are often required to take on additional responsibilities, work overtime, volunteer to fill vacant positions, and have lost protections that previously allowed them to report dangers to public safety.

Federal workers have already surrendered many rights that private-sector employees enjoy, including the ability to negotiate wages and benefits and the fundamental right to strike. *The*

Protect America's Workforce Act aims to restore and protect collective bargaining rights in the federal workplace, as outlined in Title 5 of the U.S. Code. Title 5 includes essential workplace protections such as fair pay, equitable treatment, protection against workplace retaliation, whistleblower protections, health and safety standards, and due process in grievance and disciplinary matters. These rights are crucial for addressing workplace conflicts early, improving employee retention and productivity, and boosting morale.

The federal government has long recognized workers' rights to collectively bargain within its agencies. Union membership enhances overall agency performance, fosters a better work environment, and ultimately leads to improved services for the safety and wellbeing of the public. **Congress must stand with working people and restore the fundamental rights taken from the 1.5 million public employees and veterans who proudly serve our nation.**

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