



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

---

**Opening Statement of Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), Republican Leader  
Committee on Education and Labor  
Markup of H.R. 2474, the *Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act*  
September 25, 2019**

(As prepared for delivery)

Imagine a situation where your private information is shared without your consent; you are required to pay hundreds of dollars a year to a political organization that you do not support in order to work; you are forced to declare your support to that organization publicly; and critical information about the finances and activities of the organization—which claims to represent you—is withheld from you. You may think I am describing an Orwellian nightmare, but I just laid out several of many indignities which will be inflicted upon American workers if H.R. 2474, the legislation we are considering today, becomes law.

Members of this Committee know that union membership is on the decline while at the same time unemployment rates are at historic lows and the disparities in income inequality have shrunk. With a constantly shrinking membership base, Union bosses are desperate to retain power, so they are now exerting their political influence and demanding radical changes to national labor laws that will allow them to coerce workers further, line their own pockets, and bolster their own agendas. This isn't surprising. We know that the largest federation of labor unions in America spends more than three times as much money on political activity as it does on its stated goal of representing workers.

Instead of increasing transparency and accountability to serve their members better and become more attractive to workers, Big Labor is demanding that House Democrats ram through H.R. 2474, a sweeping and radical wish-list designed to appeal to union bosses and liberal Democrat primary voters, not American workers.

Also included in this union boss wish-list masquerading as legislation is a “card-check” scheme that sets up a biased process in which a union can automatically be certified as the workers’ bargaining representative without ever winning a secret ballot election. This same undemocratic policy, which turns our justice system’s presumption of innocence on its head and deprives workers the essential right to a secret ballot election, was rejected by Congress the last time Democrats controlled the House, Senate, and White House. Congress shouldn’t be in the business of denying workers’ voting rights. Congressional Democrats select their own leadership by secret ballot and are hard at work ensuring that same right applies to workers in Mexico. Why do the Democrats want to deny that same right to Americans in the workplace?

Equally invasive and risky is a provision that requires employers to hand over reams of workers’ private, personal information to union organizers, including home addresses, cellphone and landline numbers, personal email addresses, and more—without workers having any say in the matter and without any assurances that hackers won’t have a field day with the information.

Mr. Chairman, instead of considering this radical bill today, this Committee should be scrutinizing the widespread, brazen lawbreaking by United Autoworkers Union (UAW) leaders who betrayed the trust of 150,000 American autoworkers. The details of this widening corruption scandal are disgusting. High-ranking union officials are being investigated and indicted for spending workers’ hard-earned union dues on lavish personal expenses. What’s more disturbing is that H.R. 2474 will make these shameful episodes of union corruption even more common. The legislation doubles down on the lack of transparency in union spending and activities. Instead of strengthening union reporting requirements to the federal government, the bill would overturn right-to-work laws passed in 27 states. Under H.R. 2474, workers who don’t want to join a union and don’t wish to be represented by a union will still be forced to pay millions of dollars to the labor union in their workplace, even if union leaders use those dues on sports cars, golf trips, and parties, like they did at the UAW.

The bill before us takes our labor laws backwards. The future of work in America should not be governed by the radical and coercive policies contained in this legislation. H.R. 2474 will subject more workers and businesses to union harassment, force more workers into one-size-fits-all union contracts, and

increase disruptive and economically painful strikes and boycotts—returning America to the chaotic labor landscape of the 1930s.

American workers are benefitting from the strong economy bolstered by Republican-led tax and regulatory reform. Wages are rising, unemployment is at near-record lows, and millions of jobs have been created since President Trump took office. Individual freedom, innovation and pro-growth economic policies create the best path forward for workers and job-seekers, not more coercion and red tape. Members should oppose this radical, backwards looking bill which diminishes the rights of workers and employers alike while providing a political gift to union special interests.

###