



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

---

**Opening Statement of Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI), Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Hearing:  
“The Protecting the Right to Organize Act: Modernizing America’s Labor Laws”  
July 25, 2019**

“Thanks to a skyrocketing economy propelled by recent tax cuts, innovation, and American enterprise, great workers throughout the country are experiencing record-breaking success. While workers’ lives are improving, union membership rates have steadily plummeted, suggesting what Democrats refuse to acknowledge: that strong workers- strong union workers as well- and not strong union bosses, lead to economic prosperity. Workers’ disenchantment with union representation has created a real crisis for union leaders, who instead of increasing transparency and accountability to serve their members better, continue to exert their political influence by demanding radical national labor laws. Union bosses—and the Democrats who have their support—want to use the power of government to further consolidate control, coerce workers, and bolster their personal agendas. And as evidenced by steadily declining union membership rates, that doesn’t sit well with American workers.

The bill we’re here to discuss today, H.R. 2474, the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act), is a sweeping labor union boss wish-list designed to appeal to liberal Democrat primary voters rather than American workers in a modern workplace. This legislation is based not on the innovative 21st century economy we are fortunate enough to enjoy today, but on the economic and workplace realities of the 1930’s, when my father was helping organize labor at the steel mills in Chicago, and it increases the coercive power of Big Labor at the expense of workers and business owners.

Among a list of dangerous one-sided provisions, the bill contains a ‘card-check’ scheme, the same undemocratic concept that was rejected by Congress the last time Democrats were in power. If a union loses an election, the legislation requires employers to prove they did not interfere in the election’s results—a

nearly impossible standard to demonstrate, which defies our nation's long-held principle that you are innocent until proven guilty. If an employer is unable to prove that it didn't interfere, a union is automatically ushered into the workplace, without ever winning a secret ballot election. Americans select their representation in Congress by secret ballot, and Congressional Democrats select their own leadership by secret ballot, but today they seek to deny that same right to Americans in the workplace. Where is the logic in that?

Remarkably, the bill also requires employers to turn over workers' personal information. I wouldn't want that. The workers I know don't want that. This information includes their home addresses, cellphone and landline numbers, personal email addresses, and more—without workers ever having a say in the matter. It also bans state right-to-work laws, enacted by state legislators and/or citizens, that allow workers to decide for themselves whether to join and pay a union—laws that have resulted in more jobs and higher incomes for workers since being enacted in 27 states, including my home state of Michigan.

The radical and coercive policies in this legislation are blatantly anti-worker, and blatantly pro-union boss. Democrats are claiming that this bill will “modernize” labor law. In reality, H.R. 2474 amounts to little more than forcing more workers into one-size-fits-all union contracts and returning to a stale and old-fashioned 1930s-era view of the American economy and workforce. Unlike this antiquated, anti-growth, special interest viewpoint, Republicans believe that true modernization means expanding entrepreneurial opportunity and embracing flexible work arrangements and ensuring that union bosses are truly accountable to the workers they claim to represent.

There is nothing ‘progressive’ or ‘modern’ about what the Democrats are proposing in this bill. History has shown us that individual opportunity, innovation, and economic growth are what lead to real progress and prosperity for American workers.

Americans are benefiting from the strong economy ushered in 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.

But the anti-worker bill being discussed today would threaten this progress. Instead of more freedom and opportunity, it promises more coercion and red

tape. Republicans on this Committee will continue to stand with workers and promote individual freedom and pro-growth economic policies as the best path forward for workers and job-seekers throughout the country.”

###