



Leo W. Gerard
International President

September 21, 2018

VIA FAX

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 850,000 union members of United Steelworkers and the millions of Americans who want to form a union, **I urge you to co-sponsor and pass H.R.6080 the “Workers’ Freedom to Negotiate Act of 2018”**.

Wages for private-sector workers have stagnated over the past three and a half decades. It is beyond time to change the ability of workers to get a raise. H.R. 6080 will empower workers to realize their economic potential with some of the most significant labor reforms since 1947.

The ability to form a union is one of the surest ways to improving economic outcomes. According to the Department of Labor, among full-time wage and salary workers, union members had median usual weekly earnings of \$1,041 in 2017, while those who were not union members had median weekly earnings of \$829.¹ Diving deeper into the numbers provides even more significant contrasts between unionized workers and non-union workers. African-American workers in a union make approximately 21 percent more than their non-union counterparts. Women organized by a union make approximately 24 percent more than their non-union counterparts. It is in the economic interest of all workers to have collective bargaining easily accessible.

However, the ability of employers to flaunt the law and receive insignificant punishment for undermining union organizing has become one of the greatest economic injustices in the U.S. 92 percent of companies force employees to attend mandatory anti-union presentations.² Workers trying to form a union often report threats of termination and threats of plant closure. The “Workers Freedom to Negotiate Act” will not stop all illegal tactics by employers trying to avoid a union, but

¹ <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>

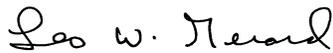
² https://www.goiam.org/publications/Legislative_Issues/TheFreedomtoFormAUnion/Employers_Interfere_with_Workers.pdf

it will hold them accountable through increased penalties for illegal tactics done during a union organizing effort.

H.R. 6080 removes prohibitions on workers acting in solidarity with workers at other companies, it protects workers who engage in peaceful protest actions with their fellow workers, and it safeguards the right to strike, a tool workers rarely wish to use but are often left with no other option to protect their rights at work.

The “Workers’ Freedom to Negotiate Act” would create a counterweight and modernize labor relations to empower workers to act collectively. Recent statistics indicate that workers’ desire to join a union is at a four-decade high.³ Now is the time for Congress to act and provide millions of America’s workers with the tools they need to secure a better future for themselves and their families. **I strongly urge you to co-sponsor and support the “Workers’ Freedom to Negotiate Act”, H.R. 6080.**

Sincerely,



Leo W. Gerard
International President

LWG/cdk

³ <http://www.wfae.org/post/conversation-who-wants-join-union-growing-number-americans#stream/0>