

Interreligious Network for Worker Solidarity

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Faith Leaders Support PRO Act to Advance Workers' Rights

From our standpoint of faith, America must honor the sacred worth and dignity of work and every worker in the United States.

Drawing on our sacred scriptures and religious traditions, we believe workers should be free to join together in solidarity to make their voices heard, and to improve their lives and the lives of their families. Because we believe in the sacred worth of both work and workers, we support the “Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO)” Act, which will strengthen and expand the right of workers to form unions, bargain collectively, and engage in collective action without fear of retaliation by their employers.

The right of workers to organize in unions is a fundamental human right. This right can unlock the door to a just wage, a safe workplace, and respect on the job for America’s working families. Workers’ right to organize and to be heard is a critical part of any healthy democracy, and is essential to ensuring that human beings are treated with dignity and not as mere objects or means to others’ ends.

For decades workers’ rights in the United States have been under assault. Too many unscrupulous employers fire workers who exercise their legal right to organize; stall on negotiating a first union contract; wrongly label their workers as “independent contractors” which bars them from unionizing; and regularly undermine the efforts of workers to come together. Under today’s laws, there are no real consequences for these unethical employers. Further, ethical employers are being undercut, resulting in a “race to the bottom.”

The consequences of the declining protection of US labor laws over the past five decades has been devastating for America’s working families. In the 1950s, 1 in 3 private sector workers enjoyed union membership; today only 1 in 16 do, despite the fact that 60 million workers would vote to join a union today if given the chance. The corporate and political attacks on worker voices has resulted in the rise of poverty wages, income inequality, and the destabilization of families, communities and our democracy.

We, the undersigned faith leaders, share a commitment to human dignity and worker justice, and that is why we support the PRO Act. The PRO Act would be a deterrent to unethical employers, empower workers, and help end workplace exploitation. Through the PRO Act, the lives of tens of millions of workers would improve, as well as the lives of their families; and communities would be stabilized for generations to come.

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- The Reverend Kate Spelman, Episcopal (Christian), Episcopal diocese of Chicago, Berwyn, IL
- Dr. Aaron Stauffer, Christian, Wendland-Cook Program in Religion and Justice at Vanderbilt Divinity School, Nashville, TN
- Dr. Jason Steidl, Roman Catholic, St. Joseph's College Brooklyn, NY
- Dr. Diane Steinman, Jewish, Micah Faith Table, Forest Hills, NY
- Father Bernard Survil, Roman Catholic, Diocese of Greensburg, Jeannette, PA
- Rev. Dr. (retired) Michael Szpak, United Methodist Church, Baltimore-Washington United Methodist Conference, Silver Spring, MD
- Rev Erin Tamayo, PC USA, Presbytery of the Grand Canyon, Mesa, AZ
- Miss Elisabeth Tanner, Roman Catholic, Phoenix, AZ
- Reverend Kerry Taylor-Snyder, UCC, First Congregational Church UCC Jackson, Jackson, MI
- Sr. Emily TeKolste, Catholic, NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice, West Terre Haute, IN
- Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis, Presbyterian, Kairos Center for Religions, Rights and Social Justice, New York, NY
- Rev. John H. Thomas, United Church of Christ, Epiphany United Church of Christ, Chicago, Chicago, IL
- Father Wilbur Thomas, Roman Catholic, Catholic Diocese of Charlotte, Asheville, NC
- Sister Sheilamarie Tobbe, Roman Catholic, Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
- Rev. Phil Tom, Presbyterian, International Council of Community Churches, Longmont, CO
- Sister Rose Marie Tresp, Catholic, Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Belmont, NC
- Sister Audra Turnbull, Catholic, Riverview, MI
- Reverend Eliza Tweedy, United Church of Christ, First Church Congregational, Rochester, NH
- Brother Kevin Tyson, UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST, Trinity United Church of Christ, Oak Lawn, IL
- Sr. Nina Underwood, Catholic, Medical Missionaries of Mary, Somerville, MA
- Rabbi Victor Urecki, Jewish, Charleston, WV
- Rev. Colleen Vahey, Unitarian Universalist, Third Unitarian Church, Chicago, IL
- Mr Brian Van Leekwijck, Episcopal, Church Coordinator, Good News Gardens, The Episcopal Church, Roslyn, WA
- Sr. Joetta Venneman, Catholic, Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Western Province Leadership, Nazareth, KY
- Pastor Rodney Walker, Christian, St. Matthew Chicago, IL
- Reverend Ryan Wallace, Presbyterian Church (USA), First Presbyterian Church of Libertyville, Libertyville, IL
- Ms. Janine Walsh, Roman Catholic, Franciscan Action Network, Stratford, CT

- Dr. Kate Ward, Roman Catholic, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI
- Rev Donald Ward, S.J., roman Catholic, Sacred Heart Parish, Richmond, VA
- Reverend Michael Ware, Baptist, North Shore Baptist Church, Chicago, IL
- Pastor Lisa K Watson-Hill, ELCA - Lutheran, St. Matthew, Schaumburg, IL
- Reverend Will Wauters, TSSF, Episcopal, Santa Fe Episcopal Church, San Antonio, Tx
- Rabbi Max Weiss, Jewish, Oak Park Temple B'nai Abraham Zion, Oak Park, IL
- Dr. Bethany Welch, Roman Catholic, Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Philadelphia, PA
- Rev. Jason Wells, Episcopal, NH Council of Churches, Pembroke, NH
- Rev Mark W Wendorf, Presbyterian Church (USA), Sanford, ME
- Sister Nancy Westmeyer, Catholic, Sisters of St. Francis of Tiffin, Ohio, Toledo, OH
- Independent Catholic Political Theologian Vanessa Wibberley Denier, The American Communion Project, Cincinnati, OH
- Sister Karen A Wieleba, Catholic, Bernardine Franciscans Farmington Hills, MI
- Rev. Dr. Robin E. Wilson, Methodist, African Methodist Episcopal Church, Lee's Summit, MO
- Rev Dr Christian Winn, Christian, Eden Prairie, MN
- Rev. Sara Wohlleb, United Church of Christ, United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL
- Mr. Roger Yockey, Catholic, Secular Franciscan, OFS, Yakima, WA
- Reverend William Zavaski, Roman Catholic, Archdiocese of Chicago, Arlington Heights, IL
- Rabbi Michael Zedek, Reform Judaism, Emanuel Congregation, Chicago, IL
- Ms. Emily Zinsitz, Protestant, UCC Justice & Witness Ministries, Princeton, NJ
- Rev. Adrienne, United Methodist, Central UMC Skokie, Addison, IL
- Religious Annabelle, Christian-Non denominational, Laurel, MD
- Religieuse LALAO, Catholique, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of Good Shepherd
- Mr. George, Catholic, Sisters and Associates of St. Francis, Tiffin, Ohio, Tiffin, OH
- Justice Advocacy and Outreach Manager Christian Watkins, United Methodist, National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA (NCC), Washington, DC