

Following are five sample letters to the editor. Choose an option that applies best to your situation and use it as a guide to submit a letter to the editor or opinions desk at your local newspaper.

Option 1

It's time to hold employers accountable. It's time to pass the PRO Act.

Dear Editor,

In 2020, American heroes in grocery stores, the U.S. Postal Service, hospitals and more became known as “essential workers,” and many of them had to risk their lives by going to work in unsafe conditions. As the coronavirus crisis continues into 2021 and deadly workplace risks remain, there has never been a more important time to give workers more voice and power.

Research shows that nearly 60 million workers would join a labor union if given the opportunity. So why haven't they?

For years, policymakers, lobbyists and CEOs have stopped at nothing to keep worker power at bay. They weakened the National Labor Relations Act. They attacked collective bargaining rights.

2020 underscored something else, too—how urgently we need labor law reform.

Under current law, the penalties against employers who illegally fire or retaliate against workers who are trying to form a union are a drop in the bucket. As a result, employers routinely retaliate against pro-union workers, because they know it will undermine the organizing campaign and they will face no real consequences. To them, it's simply the cost of doing business.

For the first time in modern history, however, we have the chance to turn this around. The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would hold employers accountable and institute civil penalties for violations of the law, including back pay and damages.

The PRO Act would put the decision of whether or not to form a union back where it belongs—in the hands of workers, free from employer interference.

Sincerely,

[Name, Local Lodge XX, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers]

Option 2

No going back: It's time for a new era in America's labor movement.

Dear Editor,

With a pro-worker majority in the House, Senate and White House, America's labor movement has a real chance to build the power of working people like never before.

This raises the question: How?

The answer is with the passage of the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, the most significant worker empowerment legislation since the Great Depression.

If passed, it would dramatically increase penalties for employers that violate workers' rights; protect strikes and other protest activity; streamline the process for reaching a collective bargaining agreement once a union is formed; and so much more.

This isn't just any bill—it's civil rights legislation, protecting women, immigrants, people of color, the LGBTQ community, and economic stimulus, putting more money in the pockets of workers, which helps our economy build back better. It's a generational opportunity for the nearly 60 million workers who want to join a union but haven't found the path to get there under current law.

The PRO Act was passed by the House in 2020 but stalled when it fell onto former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's desk. When McConnell rejected the bill, he slapped millions of America's workers and union members in the face. And it stung.

With the sting of McConnell's abhorrent rejection fresh in our minds, we canvassed. We made phone calls. We knocked on doors. And we got it done. That's why in 2021, America's labor movement will do everything in our power to win.

There's no going back: It's time for accountability and action. It's time to pass the PRO Act.

Sincerely,

[Name, Local Lodge XX, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers]

Option 3

Let's be clear: Right to work is wrong. The PRO Act will wipe it off the map.

Dear Editor,

Nearly 60 million people say they would join a union today if they could. The problem? Union-busters, big business and woefully outdated laws continue to undermine the right to collectively bargain.

Just take "right to work" laws, for example. Across the country, anti-worker legislators are relentlessly fighting to pass right to work, which has a more than 70-year track record of lowering wages, reducing benefits and making workplaces more dangerous.

Right to work is a Jim Crow relic that was specifically designed to keep white and Black workers apart, playing on our worst fears to keep working people divided, poor and weak. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. called it a false slogan, designed to rob us of our job rights and our civil rights.

Here are the results: On average, workers in states with right to work laws make nearly \$9,000 less per year than workers in states without these laws (\$50,174 compared with \$59,163).

In 2019, 24% of jobs in right to work states were in low-wage occupations, compared to just 14.5% of jobs in other states.

The rate of workplace deaths is 37% higher in states with right to work laws.

But now we have a chance to put right to work where it belongs—in the trash bin of history, with the poll tax and separate but equal doctrine.

The Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act would override these laws and strike a major victory for civil rights as our country demands racial and economic justice.

The PRO Act was passed by the House last year but was blocked in the Senate. This year, we have another chance to make history. It's time to pass the PRO Act and end right to work for good.

Sincerely,

[Name, Local Lodge XX, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers]

Option 4

It's time to end the exploitation of platform workers

Dear Editor,

Workers across the country have borne the brunt of our nation's COVID-19 economic fallout for nearly a year. And people who work so-called “gig jobs” for platform companies such as Uber or DoorDash are among the most exposed and vulnerable with very few protections and without a say in the way they do their work. We need to change that.

Uber, DoorDash and other corporate interests like to sell these jobs as flexible and innovative, but in fact they come with few rights and virtually no power. Because workers in these jobs are employees who are often misclassified as independent contractors, they take on the responsibilities of employment without the benefits and protections of being an employee. And with a worldwide pandemic continuing to rage on, those benefits and protections have never been more important.

Unfortunately, under the National Labor Relations Act, independent contractors do not have the right to organize. This means these workers can't hold corporations accountable should they get sick or injured on the job, nor can they bargain for better pay or safety.

This is why we must pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, worker empowerment legislation that would clarify “gig workers” for these platform companies have bargaining rights.

Working people should have the right to form a union in every sector of the economy.

We are done with the greed of employers—more like robber barons—who feed off of a perverse system that allows them to abuse platform workers and deny them bargaining rights by misclassifying them as independent contractors. Workers deserve better. Workers deserve the PRO Act.

Sincerely,

[Name, Local Lodge XX, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers]

Option 5

PRO Act will protect workers on and off the picket line

Dear Editor,

For centuries, workers in unions have used strikes as a leverage tool in our fight for a better workplace. And yet in recent history, an employee's decision on whether to strike has been unfairly weighed against the potential for disastrous personal consequences.

While it is legal for a worker to withhold labor, court decisions in recent years have drastically undermined this right by allowing employers to "permanently replace" strikers. In other words, employers frequently retaliate against and fire striking workers.

Just take what happened last year at the Asarco copper mine in Tucson, Arizona, and the refinery in Amarillo, Texas. In their fight for a fair contract, 1,800 union members, represented by a plethora of unions, including United Steelworkers Local 937, went on [strike](#) for nearly nine months.

One day out of nowhere, Asarco replaced the striking workers with hundreds of nonunion workers. And now, despite the strike ending, Asarco [says](#), "[u]nion members are entitled to their former or similar positions only as jobs are available." This disrespectful, and frankly unlawful, statement is a slap in the face to the workers who fought for nearly an entire year in the middle of a worldwide pandemic, for the right to safe and fair working conditions.

The Protecting the Right to Work (PRO) Act will prohibit employers from permanently replacing strikers. No one—no one—should fear for their livelihoods when going on strike.

Working people deserve a voice on the job, at the bargaining table and on the picket line. It's time for a change. And it's past time to pass the PRO Act.

Sincerely,

[Name, Local Lodge XX, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers]