

PRO Act Would Hurt Virginia Workers, Take Away Choice

The PRO Act would allow unions to get workers in Virginia fired for not paying them. The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) allows states to decide if workers can be forced to pay union fees.

- 89,000 Virginians currently work at firms unionized under the NLRA. These workers can choose whether or not to join and pay the union at their workplace. If the PRO Act became law, they would be forced to pay union fees no matter how well their union represented them.¹
- 3.1 million Virginians could be unionized under the NLRA. If the PRO Act became law, any of these workers could be forced to pay union fees if their workplaces unionized.²

The cost of annual union dues in Virginia's eight largest NLRA union local's ranges from \$300 to \$1,100 a year. On average these dues cost Virginian workers almost \$550 a year. If the PRO Act became law, Virginia unions could force workers to pay these dues.³

VOTERS SUPPORT WORKER FREEDOM

Voters support worker freedom in opposition to the PRO Act. According to a recent poll:

- 70% of voters are concerned about the PRO Act forcing workers to pay union fees. This includes 68% of Democrats, 65% of Independents, and 74% of Republicans.⁴
- In Virginia, 72 percent of voters are concerned about repealing the state law that protects workers from getting fired for not paying union fees.

1 "PRO Act Would Reduce Workers' Incomes and Job Opportunities," Institute for the American Worker, July 2021 at <https://i4aw.org/resources/report-pro-act-would-reduce-workers-incomes-and-job-opportunities/>

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Ibid.*

4 Forbes Tate Partners, a bipartisan government affairs and research firm, national survey of 1,006 registered U.S. voters conducted between May 25 – June 2, 2021 http://myprivateballot.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/PRO_Act-National-Survey-Summary-6.28.21.pdf

Forbes Tate Partners, a bipartisan government affairs and research firm, conducted a national survey of 1,006 registered U.S. voters from May 25 to June 2, 2021, and the results reveal what at best might be called widespread skepticism about the PRO Act and/or the kinds of policies it would impose.

WORKER FREEDOM IS GOOD FOR WORKERS, THE ECONOMY AND UNION ACCOUNTABILITY

States that allow workers to choose whether or not to join and pay a union attract employers and ultimately create jobs.

- Employers are more likely to invest or build new factories in these states.⁵
- States that allow worker choice have one-fifth to one-third more manufacturing jobs than states with forced fees.⁶
- They have lower unemployment rates, 1.2 percentage points lower than forced fee states.⁷
- Unions are more accountable in these states because they can't take worker support for granted.⁸

5 Eunbi Kim, "The impact of right-to-work legislation on foreign manufacturing employment in the United States," *International Journal of Urban Sciences*, April 26, 2021.

6 Thomas J. Holmes, "The Effect of State Policies on the Location of Manufacturing: Evidence from State Borders," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 106, No. 4 (1998), pp. 667-705; Charlene M. Kalenkoski and Donald J. Lacombe, "Right-to-Work Laws and Manufacturing Employment: The Importance of Spatial Dependence," *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (October 2006), pp. 402-418.

7 James Sherk, "Union Membership and Compulsory Dues Do Not Increase Workers' Overall Living Standards," Heritage Foundation Backgrounder #3051, November 9, 2015, Table 5 at <http://thf-reports.s3.amazonaws.com/2015/BG3051.pdf>

8 Lydia DePillis, "The Supreme Court's threat to gut unions is giving the labor movement new life," *The Washington Post*, July 1, 2015 at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/work/wp/2015/07/01/the-supreme-courts-threat-to-gut-unions-is-giving-the-labor-movement-new-life/>



The Institute for the American Worker provides real-time research and training to equip policymakers with the tools they need to stand up for American workers. Included in this backgrounder is a breakdown of labor-related bills that would impact North Carolina, and additional background on the state's workforce. More resources can be found on our website at www.I4AW.org.
