

HOW IT'S BEING RECEIVED: Congressional Leaders, NLRB Experts, Civil Rights Groups, and Faith Community Applaud Proposed NLRB Rule Changes

Washington, DC — Congressional leaders, former National Labor Relations Board members, and civil rights and faith groups joined labor unions and workers' rights advocates in voicing their support for Tuesday's proposed election rule changes from the NLRB.

By eliminating voting delays and modernizing an outdated system, the rule removes unfair obstacles so that workers can vote on whether to form a union if they want to

Here are just a few of the people and organizations who've weighed in so far in support of the rule change:

Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid: "Today's proposed rule change is about fairness. It would help give workers the same ability to bargain for wages and benefits now enjoyed by CEOs – whose pay has skyrocketed while their employees continue to struggle."

Rep. Nancy Pelosi: "Around the world, the United States advocates to help ensure that working people have a voice in determining their future; this will help guarantee the same opportunities for workers here at home."

Sen. Tom Harkin: "Right now, CEOs can bargain to secure extremely generous salaries and golden-parachute retirements, but millions of hardworking Americans don't have a way to guarantee from week to week that they'll be able to work enough hours to feed their family, or that their health benefits won't be cut without notice... I applaud the NLRB for taking a significant step forward in restoring the middle class by proposing rules to fix the broken union election process."

Sen. John Kerry: "This rule is fundamentally American because it protects workers' rights to choose to have a union or to choose not to – and that's a choice we believe in as a matter of principle."

Sen. Al Franken: "Endless red tape shouldn't get in the way of allowing workers the freedom to decide if they want to form a union. The new rules proposed by the NLRB will help ensure workers can hold fair elections in a timely manner."

Sen. Barbara Boxer: "The current union election system is badly broken and breeds fear in the workplace. It's no secret that expensive litigation and intimidation are often used to prevent employees from forming a union and negotiating for fair wages and benefits. The NLRB's proposed rules will instill fairness for both employers and workers by ensuring a fair, timely vote."

Sen. Jeff Merkley: "This proposed rule change is about fairness—giving workers updated organizing tools they can use to negotiate good wages and good benefits."

Sen. Barbara Mikulski: "We need an economy that works for everyone and that means giving workers the right to organize and negotiate. This rule will ensure that workers can exercise their rights under the law in a timely way."

Sen. Patty Murray: "Workers and businesses across America deserve to have a fair and modern union election process, and the NLRB's common-sense rule proposal will go a long way toward making that happen."

Sen. Ben Cardin: “Workers deserve the right to choose a union or not to choose a union with a fair, timely, and well-informed up-or-down vote. The right to vote is central to our democracy, and we must continue to ensure that American workers are afforded this right without impediment or fear. Thus, I applaud the NLRB for their actions.”

Sen. Charles Schumer: “The right of American workers to organize in a free and fair system is a cornerstone of our economic well-being. The NLRB took an important step towards preserving workplace fairness by proposing new rules that promote equality and efficiency in union elections. These common-sense rules will level the playing field and help bring more American men and women into the middle class.”

Sen. Richard Blumenthal: “The proposed rule by the National Labor Relations Board is a crucial step toward increasing fairness in the workplace and instituting transparent union elections. Protecting the rights of workers in Connecticut and across the country to join together and collectively bargain with their employers without fear of intimidation and in good faith is central to the growth of the middle-class, and this rule brings us closer to that goal.”

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse: “The National Labor Relations Board’s proposed rules would reduce unnecessary and costly delays in the conduct of union elections. Workers and businesses deserve a level playing field, and I believe that these proposed rules are a step in the right direction to help restore our middle class.”

Sen. Kristen Gillibrand: “This is the right decision for the National Labor Relations Board. A growing economy and a thriving middle class starts with our workers having the right to join together and fight for fair wages and strong benefits to raise a family, and enjoy the retirement they’ve spent a lifetime earning with some peace of mind.”

Sen. Debbie Stabenow: “Workers and businesses deserve a bargaining process that is reasonable and fair every step of the way. These new rules will help ensure the rights of all will be respected and that excessive litigation will not needlessly delay certification elections.”

Sen. Jon Tester: “A worker’s right to organize and bargain for fair opportunities has helped build America’s strong middle class. The National Labor Relations Board’s proposal streamlines and modernizes the union election process so that workers can make their own decisions about whether to join a union without any outside interference. America’s workers deserve an open and transparent election process, and that’s what these proposed rules offer.”

Rep. Donna Edwards: “The NLRB’s proposed reforms simplify the process that protects a worker’s right to unionize, bringing us closer to achieving the aims of the National Labor Relations Act. Our workers deserve a fair shake when determining whether to form a union; a choice that is a fundamental American principle.”

Rep. George Miller: “The proposed changes, while certainly not solving all the difficulties workers face when attempting to exercise their rights, reduce opportunities for bad actors who want to obstruct or interfere with an election.”

Rep. Betty McCollum: “Yesterday, the National Labor Relations Board announced a reasonable rule to restore fairness in the American workplace. This practical fix will streamline and repair the broken system that unnecessarily draws out representation elections for both workers and their employers.”

Rep. Gwen Moore: “Union participation and a strong middle class go hand in hand. And if we make it easier for workers who want to join a union to do so, we will bolster America’s middle class, which has been beleaguered by increased health care and education costs alongside stagnant wages.”

[Rep. Dennis Kucinich](#): “I strongly support the NLRB’s proposed rule change. It represents great progress toward empowering more workers by giving them a voice. One of the greatest barriers toward an American economic recovery is the steady weakening of the middle class. The National Labor Relations Board has a long history of reviewing and revising its procedures in order to make resolution of union representation cases more efficient.”

Rep. Rick Larsen: “I fully support the NLRB’s proposed changes, and applaud their efforts to make the rules governing union election simpler, easier to understand, and much more clear. Business and workers deserve an efficient election process when workers are trying to organize.”

Rep. Steve Rothman: “These rules are an important step toward addressing the major problems that exist today in the union election process and will protect both the worker’s and employer’s right to a fair up-or-down vote in a reasonable period of time. As this process moves forward, we must continue to remove inequalities at the bargaining table.”

[Rep. Tim Ryan](#): “I rise today to thank the NLRB for moving in a direction with a recent proposed change that will actually strengthen a worker’s ability in the United States to unite, to work within a system that has more transparency, that is fairer, that is streamlined, so that we can return a little bit more power here in the United States of America to the worker.”

Rep. Betty Sutton: “The charge of the NLRB is to ensure our workers get a fair shake. But for far too long working men and women have had to deal with an outdated and lopsided system that puts the wants of big corporations over the needs of employees. At a time when our middle class is consistently under attack, these new proposed rules represent a positive step in restoring a more level playing field for workers.”

[Rep. Chaka Fattah](#): “With the economy in recovery, we must continue to focus on rebuilding the middle class and upholding the rights of America’s workers as we strive to win the future. The National Labor Relations Board has proposed a common sense rule for worker representation elections that will help us accomplish our economic goals with a labor force that is efficient, productive and treated fairly.”

[Rep. Yvette Clarke](#): “Our nation’s workers need to have a fair and transparent process surrounding union elections. The NLRB’s proposed rule is a good first step in reforming union elections. The changes proposed by the NLRB help protect workers from employers, who may want to manipulate the process by delaying union elections and thereby stifling workers’ ability to unionize quickly and efficiently.”

[Rep. Raul Grijalva](#): “The status quo is obviously broken, and the Board rightly recognizes this is a chance to make working Americans’ lives better,” Grijalva said. “There’s no reason to oppose these sensible improvements other than ideology, and ideology is the last thing that’s going to help working families through tough times. These rules should be approved as soon as possible, and I’m proud to stand with working people all over the country to make sure that happens.”

Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Sen. Carl Levin, Rep. John D. Dingell, Rep. John Conyers, Rep. Dale E. Kildee, Rep. Gary Peters, Rep. Sander M. Levin, Rep. Hansen Clarke: “We agree with the Board that the NPRM’s amendments would streamline the resolution of questions related to workplace representation, including secret-ballot elections. We share the belief that employees should be afforded a free, fair, and expeditious process by which to choose workplace representation. The Board’s NPRM reflects this belief, and as such, we urge its adoption.”

Los Angeles Times Editorial Board: “On Tuesday, the National Labor Relations Board proposed new rules that could prevent employers from misusing the secret-ballot process, as many have in the past, to slow down union certification and thwart workers’ attempts to organize. It’s a welcome step forward for the board, which for too long has tilted too far away from workers’ rights and toward management.”

Former NLRB Member Sarah Fox: “For decades, analysts and commentators have discussed the pervasive problem of delays in the NLRB election process, both between the filing of a petition and the actual election, and between the holding of the election and the certification of results... These are modest and common sense reforms that seek to address a serious and long-recognized problem.”

Center for American Progress President John Podesta: “The same crowd that is trying to take away collective bargaining rights in the states is opposing a modest improvement to give workers a fairer, more standardized process for voting to join a union.”

NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous: “In a time where the rights of working families and union members are under assault, and corporations are using extreme tactics to discourage the formation of unions, the NLRB stood up for the hard working American men and women today.”

Kim Bobo, Executive Director of Interfaith Worker Justice: “Without this step forward, anti-union employers have too much power to intimidate workers and stop them from expressing their voice on the job.”

Bishop Gabino Zavala, Archdiocese of Los Angeles: “Though a relatively minor rule change, it restores fairness to a process that is tilted heavily in favor of employers who often delay union votes by months or even years with excessive litigation. Irresponsible companies that stall to prevent workers from voting to form a union frequently retaliate against employees with threats and intimidation. In fact, during organizing campaigns more than a third of employees simply fire workers who are pro-union.”

Wade Henderson, President of The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights: “Ensuring workers have a fair chance to vote and to join a union, should they so choose, is a pillar of our democracy as well as our economy. The right to join together to form a union can help restore our middle class, put foods on the table of working families, and stabilize communities that are reeling from loss of income.”

Kimberly Freeman Brown, Executive Director American Rights at Work (Statement): “As the gap between everyday Americans and corporate CEOs continues to widen, the proposed rule is a modest but welcome step toward restoring balance to our economy and rebuilding the middle class.”

Kimberly Freeman Brown, Executive Director American Rights at Work (Op-ed): “By cutting back on needless bureaucracy and discouraging costly, frivolous litigation, the proposed rule modernizes the union election process. It guarantees a clear, standardized process that workers and employers both deserve -- a process that cannot be manipulated by either side to gain an unfair advantage. In so doing, the rule would improve stability and reduce conflict in the workplace, and ensure that taxpayer dollars aren't wasted on baseless court battles. It's a modest and important step toward a fair vote for workers and a more balanced economy.”

Christy Setzer, Spokeswoman, Chamber Watch: “On the same day that the US Chamber was busy declaring war on the regulatory agencies that ensure we have clean water, protect us from harmful products, and give workers a voice in a struggling economy, the Chamber also took aim at modest changes in the National Labor Relations Board's union election system. These changes would streamline and modernize an outdated system that's consistently favored corporations over workers, yet predictably, the Chamber is choosing political posturing over help for actual workers.”

Gordon Lafer, Economic Policy Institute: “The Economic Policy Institute sees the proposed rules as a positive and important, if modest, step toward making workplace elections more democratic. The new rule proposals focus on guaranteeing that management and employees have equal access to the list of potential voters, and on removing incentives for frivolous legal claims whose purpose is to artificially delay the vote for partisan purposes. Under the new rules, hearings on legal and logistical objections regarding the election will be held after the election if they affect less than 20% of potential voters, with ballots impounded until all claims that might affect the election's outcome have been resolved.”

AFL-CIO President Richard L. Trumka: “When workers want to vote on a union, they should get a fair chance to vote. That’s a basic right. But our current system has become a broken, bureaucratic maze that stalls and stymies workers’ choices. And that diminishes the voice of working people, creates imbalance in our economy and shrinks the middle class.”

American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten: The changes proposed by the National Labor Relations Board represent a modest but significant step in protecting the right of working men and women to decide whether to form a union. These commonsense proposals are designed to ensure a fair process for workers who want to vote on whether to unionize.

Communications Workers of America: “The NLRB has taken a step toward reducing some of the delay that drags out the election process for months and even years”

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers President Edwin D. Hill: “For too long the right of workers to choose their own collective bargaining agent has been hampered by red tape and delays.”

International Brotherhood of Teamsters President Jim Hoffa: “In our experience, more than a third of employers fire workers who want to unionize. That’s why America has lost 10 percent of its middle-class jobs since 2000. This rule gives workers a reasonable chance to join together to restore fairness and balance.”

Laborers International Union of North America President Terry O`Sullivan: “The common-sense reforms the NLRB has proposed will begin to bring union elections into the 21st century and are a step toward reducing the possibility of unscrupulous employers interfering with the right of workers to make an informed decision on whether to unionize.”

Service Employees International Union President Mary Kay Henry: “It’s time to restore some measure of balance and fairness to the system, starting with making sure workers have the right to vote whether to form a union without unnecessary delays.”

United Food & Commercial Workers Executive Vice President Pat O`Neill: “We view the proposed election rule changes as a modest but important first step toward modernizing and streamlining an outmoded process that encourages unnecessary, time-consuming and wasteful litigation.”

United Steel Workers: “The changes in the proposed rule are aimed at ensuring a fair process by cleaning up and modernizing a system paralyzed by delays, bureaucracy, and wasteful litigation.”

Gabe Morgan, SEIU-Pennsylvania: “The truth is that the current system allows unscrupulous employers to delay union elections, stretching out the time during which they can intimidate and coerce workers. One-third of employers fire workers during organizing drives, and threats are commonplace. Under the proposed rule, employers would still have plenty of opportunities to share their views. They would continue to have unfettered access to workers throughout the work days leading up to an election, as well as during the months and years that might precede an organizing drive. The proposed NLRB rule is a modest, long-overdue step to restore fairness to the system. “

Professor Kenneth Dau-Schmidt, Indiana University School of Law: “The Board’s election procedure is broken and in need of an overhaul. The procedure is broken because it includes outmoded and superfluous procedures that do not meet the standards of modern administrative and judicial procedure and communication, adding unnecessary cost and delay to be borne by the parties and taxpayers. The procedure is also broken because it allows unscrupulous employers to control the election process through delay and intimidation. Employer control of a process intended to give the employees free choice, frustrates the employees’ statutory right to choose and undermines the integrity of the process.”

Professor Laura Dresser, Center on Wisconsin Strategy UW-Madison: “This proposed rule change simply ensures that workers have the basic right to vote. That’s a right we hold dear. Under the current union election process, workers face systematic delay tactics — litigation, wrangling, stalling — sometimes waiting months or even years for their union vote. The proposed new rules simply help remove obstacles so workers can make their own decision about unions. And the rules help modernize the current bureaucratic process in ways that will save both workers and employers time and money.”

Professor Julius Getman, University of Texas-Austin Law School: “The new rules the board is proposing will improve the balance between employer and union representatives, while staying within the limits imposed by the Supreme Court. They would make it easier for the union to get in touch with employees without entering company property. Currently, employers are required to furnish the union with the names and addresses of workers eligible to vote in the election. The new rules would require them to provide phone numbers and email addresses as well. The new rules would also speed up the process, primarily by postponing hearings on voter eligibility until after the elections.”

Professor Raymond Hogler, Colorado State University: “The NLRB posted a chart comparing current procedures and the proposed rules on its website. Even a cursory review of the materials makes clear that the board is streamlining the election process and incorporating new technology into its operations rather than creating substantive rights.”

Professor Michael Harper, Boston University School of Law: “The National Labor Relations Board’s proposed regulatory amendments, by avoiding unnecessary litigation and delays and taking advantage of modern technologies, would lessen the costs of regulation. The amendments would also make that regulation more effective by reducing the opportunities for intimidation of workers by employers who do not want to give their employees a free, uncoerced choice on whether to form a union.”

Professor John Logan, San Francisco State University: “Revisions to NLRB election processes are anathema to corporate America, which exercises a virtual stranglehold over the current system, and to Republicans, who oppose anything that protects the right to form a union. This issue is of greater importance to conservatives than Boeing, but also a more difficult one to spin with the mainstream media. How exactly will modest reforms designed to modernize administrative processes and stop employers gaming the system through extensive delay undermine employee free choice?”

Professor Richard Meagher, Randolph-Macon University: “The NLRB’s new procedures would streamline elections by allowing the use of modern communication technologies, as well as preventing unscrupulous employers from stalling elections with frivolous legal delays. Rather than adopting a pro-union stance, the NLRB is trying to do its job: ensuring fair elections for those workers considering union membership in workplaces where, contrary to stereotypes about big labor, the employers hold all the cards.”

John Brady, Registered Nurse, Remarks to NLRB: “During the 44 days between the filing of the petition and the election, management flooded our hospital with anti union literature. They pulled nurses into meetings off the floor and lectured them about the perils of joining together. At one point, two managers cornered me and pulled me into a storage room and pressured me to stop talking with the other nurses in the emergency department. The hospital used the month and a half from the day we filed to Election Day to create a high pressure atmosphere. It was a long and difficult process; I just feel grateful we were able to hold together long enough. The rules should be changed so no other nurses have to wait for their rights to be recognized.”

Veronica Tench, Lab Assistant, Remarks to NLRB: “The voice on the job we won will also help create the quality jobs our community desperately needs. As we collectively negotiate improved staffing ratios, more good jobs will be created and patient care improved. We also now will be able to make sure that experienced caregivers stay and continue to provide for our families. I’d like to make sure future workers have a more reasonable and fair process available. I appreciate and strongly support the Board’s efforts to streamline the process so that other workers who want a union hopefully won’t have to wait 13 years to get one like I did.”

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