# Labor Law Reform Part 1: Diagnosing the Issues, Exploring Current Proposals

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In my testimony today, I would like to review workers' evolving priorities, consider the unintended consequences of proposed issue- and employer-specific legislation, and make the case for a pro-worker and pro-employer modernization of labor laws.

## Workers' Priorities Are Both Steady and Evolving

Throughout history, some workforce concerns have remained top priorities, while others have changed with the ever-evolving nature of work in America. Ample job opportunities and upward mobility continue to be key priorities for workers. The impact of technological innovation—in particular, with respect to the rapid onset of artificial intelligence (AI)—has caused many workers to fear losing their jobs.

In the first half of the 20th century, strong unionization, protective regulation, and manufacturing dominance created an environment in which a collective bargaining model could yield broad benefits. But that model rested on cultural norms, economic conditions, and barriers to competition that have largely disappeared. Absent an accompanying shift in organized labors' tactics, unionization rates fell from about one-third of all workers in the 1950s to a record low of 9.9 percent in 2024.[1] Meanwhile, the once-reliable "union wage premium" has eroded in many industries, and

[1] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members—2024," January 28, 2025, https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/union2.pdf (accessed October 4, 2025).

uniform, seniority-based contract structures increasingly misalign with a nimble, innovation- and merit-driven economy.

In this new landscape in which workers are more mobile, jobs are more diverse, and many people prefer flexibility over standardization, workers have experienced massive expansions in workplace benefits like paid family leave, flexible schedules, and remote work. And online work platforms, such as UpWork, Fiverr, and Task Rabbit, alongside other expansions in independent contracting have opened doors to work opportunities, including for tens of millions of people who are unable to work traditional 9-to-5 jobs. Despite these changes and the decline in unionization, workers' desires to have a voice and individual rights in the workplace are as strong as ever, but labor laws remain stuck in the mid-20th century.

The following sections will (1) consider the potential unintended consequences of replacing private parties' collaboration with government coercion, as well as of using top-down government intervention to address employer-specific and transitory workplace concerns, and (2) make the case for modernizing labor laws to empower workers throughout the evolving future of work.

## Potential Benefits and Unintended Consequences of Recently Proposed Legislation

In an effort to address various workplace concerns, congressional lawmakers have introduced a number of policies that would alter current labor law. When considering the ultimate impact of these laws, it is important to consider not just a law's intentions, but its likely outcomes. While the goals of achieving faster first contracts and safer workplaces are commendable, the proposed policies could end up hurting the workers they seek to help.

**Faster Labor Contracts Act.** The Faster Labor Contracts Act seeks to significantly shorten the time between when a workplace becomes unionized and when it reaches its first collective bargaining agreement. Currently, most first contracts take six to 12 months to achieve, but more complex and contentious negotiations can take a year or more. This can be frustrating for workers who voted for union representation and thought that it would result in quick changes to their terms of employment.

Federal law—the National Labor Relations Act—requires employers to bargain in good faith with unions to reach a first contract, but it does not impose any deadline or mandate that the parties achieve a collective bargaining agreement. Among the basic elements necessary for an agreement to constitute a legally enforceable contract are: mutual assent, expressed by valid offer and acceptance; adequate consideration; capacity; and legality.[2] If both parties—unions and employers—do not consent to forced arbitration and do not consent to the contract they are forced to sign as a result of forced arbitration, that contract could be unenforceable.

The Faster Labor Contracts Act would impose strict timelines on collective bargaining and could result in unelected bureaucrats deciding the terms of binding contracts imposed on workers and employers. Under the Faster Labor Contracts Act, newly formed unions can choose when to issue a written request to the employer for collective bargaining to begin. At that point, employers must meet and begin

[2] Legal Information Institute, "Contract," Cornell Law School, https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/contract (accessed October 4, 2025).

bargaining within 10 days. If no agreement is reached after 90 days, either party may notify the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) that a dispute exists and request mediation. The FMCS would then initiate mediation services, and if no agreement is reached within 30 days of mediation, the FMCS will refer the dispute to a three-person binding arbitration panel.

The arbitration panel will consist of one member selected by the employer, one member selected by the union, and one neutral member agreed to by both parties. If the parties cannot agree to a neutral arbitrator, the FMCS will assign an arbitrator—a government bureaucrat—to fill the third position. Whichever agreement that at least two of the three members of the panel agree to will become the collective bargaining agreement for a minimum of two years.

While this process would likely result in faster first labor contracts, it could also have some unintended consequences, including:

- **Arbitrary and unrealistic deadlines.** The one-size-fits-all timelines imposed by the Faster Labor Contracts Act are unrealistically fast and could result in workers and employers either agreeing to or being forced into contracts that are worse than they would have achieved on their own timeline. The time it takes to reach first contracts varies significantly depending on factors like the industry, employer size, workplace complexity, negotiator experience, and the level of cooperation or contentiousness between negotiators. New contracts typically take the most time and first contracts are especially important because they set the foundation for all future contracts.

  The 130-day deadline is significantly shorter than the six to 12 months typically required to reach first contracts. This is because newly unionized employers and newly formed unions are often inexperienced in negotiations. Even before negotiations can begin, both parties need to understand federal and state labor laws that govern the negotiation process. And once negotiations start, both sides need to assess the issues that are at stake, evaluating proposed contract terms against the company's long-term viability, and ensure that proposed contract terms comply with labor laws. This can—and in most cases, probably should—take more than 130 days if both sides are to be well-informed.

  Consider the recent case in which workers at the Volkswagen (VW) plant in Chattanooga, Tennessee, voted to have the United Auto Workers (UAW) represent them in April 2024. This was VW's first experience with U.S. unionization. Meanwhile, the contract that its new union, the UAW, signed with Ford Automotive a few months earlier in December 2023 was 865 pages long and included 313 line items in its 12-page table of contents.[3] In September 2025, VW submitted its final contract offer to the UAW. If workers vote to approve this contract in October 2025, that will mark 18 months from the unionization vote to the first contract. Had both parties been forced to agree on a contract within just over four months, that contract could have risked legal challenges and resulted in unsustainable terms that ultimately hurt workers and the employer.

- **Slower contracts.** The Faster Labor Contracts Act limits the amount of time that can pass before binding arbitration is invoked, but it does not limit the timeline of arbitration.

[3] While this UAW contract is especially long, most collective bargaining agreements are well over 100 pages.

Negotiations that involve significant discovery—as could be necessary for an otherwise uninformed arbitrator to understand everything necessary about the workplace and the business's risks and finances—could easily take months, if not a year or longer. Moreover, a lack of readily available arbitrators at the FMCS could contribute to delayed contracts. Consequently, the Faster Labor Contracts Act could result in slower labor contracts.

- **Reduced union and worker clout in negotiations.** Under current labor negotiations, union and employer power is split 50–50 because both sides have to agree to a collective bargaining agreement in order for it to be signed and enforced. Under the Faster Labor Contracts Act, the union, employer, and a government-appointed arbitrator each have one-third of the power. In reality, however, the arbitrator has the most power because he or she will choose contract terms that align more closely either with the employer or with the union.

- **Politicization of collective bargaining agreements.** Since forced arbitration would put collective bargaining agreements in the hands of unelected bureaucrats, any one of those individuals could be biased in favor of employers or in favor of unions. Moreover, there would likely be political pressure from presidential Administrations to hire individuals for arbitrator positions based on their political leanings.

- **Stripping workers of the right to vote on a contract.** Currently, nearly all union constitutions and bylaws require union members' ratification of collective bargaining agreements before they are signed and enforced. Under the Faster Labor Contracts Act, any negotiations that resulted in forced arbitration would strip workers of this right to a vote as the arbitrator alone would dictate collective bargaining agreements.

- **Limiting effectiveness of workers' right to strike during negotiations.** During contract negotiations, workers can use strikes to try to pull employers closer to their demands. The potential of economically damaging weeks- or even months-long strikes can be an effective tool to force employer concessions. The rushed negotiation timeline under the Faster Labor Contracts Act limits the potential length, and thus potential economic damage of strikes for employers by guaranteeing a date by which a collective bargaining agreement must be reached and signed by the union, notwithstanding the union's and workers' potential opposition to that contract.

- **Precluding union shop and agency shop agreements, creating nationwide right-to-work standard.** In states that do not have right-to-work laws, workers can be forced as a condition of employment to either join the union and pay member dues (union shop) or to pay agency fees to the union (agency shop). As F. Vincent Vernuccio and Alexander T. MacDonald explained, the government (through a government arbitrator) imposing terms on private parties constitutes state action, and "state action opens the door to a slew of constitutional requirements and restrictions, notably to protect the rights of free speech and association."[4] In *Janus v. AFSCME*, the Supreme Court ruled that public-sector employees have a right to opt out of paying union fees based on their rights to freedom of speech and association. Thus, a government arbitrator imposing labor contract terms on private-sector employees could

[4] F. Vincent Vernuccio and Alexander T. MacDonald, "Josh Hawley's Union-Friendly Bill May Open the Door to Right-to-Work," *The Washington Examiner*, March 15, 2025, https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/3348177/josh-hawley-union-friendly-bill-may-open-right-to-work-door/ (accessed October 2, 2025).

potentially extend those same right-to-work protections to all private-sector employees across the U.S.

**Warehouse Worker Protection Act**. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act seeks to improve the safety and general wellness of warehouse workers in response to reports of productivity standards deterring workers' safety, interfering with breaks, or resulting in non-transparent discipline or rewards. Included in the Warehouse Worker Protection Act are: a requirement for employers to disclose quotas to workers and regulations; prohibition of quotas that may prevent breaks, bathroom use, or compliance with health and safety standards; a ban on retaliation against workers who fail to meet certain quotas; resurrection of a complex and excessively burdensome failed[5] ergonomics regulation; a requirement to have a trained first aid provider readily available at each facility and employer-provided access to occupational medicine consultations with board-certified physicians; and increased authority for state labor departments to investigate and enforce compliance. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act also creates a new Fairness and Transparency Office within the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division tasked with investigating, enforcing, and training inspectors to ensure compliance with the law.

While media headlines have highlighted legitimate and serious concerns in some large warehouses, a federal law dictating the terms and conditions of warehouse operations is neither the proper nor the most effective solution to addressing workers' concerns. In some instances, employers may be violating existing laws and could be forced to change their existing practices through investigations and lawsuits. In other instances where employers are not violating laws but are nonetheless maintaining practices that workers overwhelmingly dislike, direct negotiations between workers and managers, or workers choosing to "vote with their feet" by taking better jobs offer more effective solutions.

While some provisions of the Warehouse Worker Protection Act appear rational, this bill could have multiple unintended consequences:

- **Expedited automation.** Laws that raise the costs of employing workers incentivize greater automation. While robots, technology, and artificial intelligence cost money, they do not require benefits, breaks, ergonomic accommodations, or other "protections"; their production capacity is clear-cut and consistent; and they cannot sue their employer. Some of the companies that the Warehouse Worker Protection Act targets are already among the most technologically advanced and earliest adopters of automation and this bill would incentivize even greater use of automation over workers.

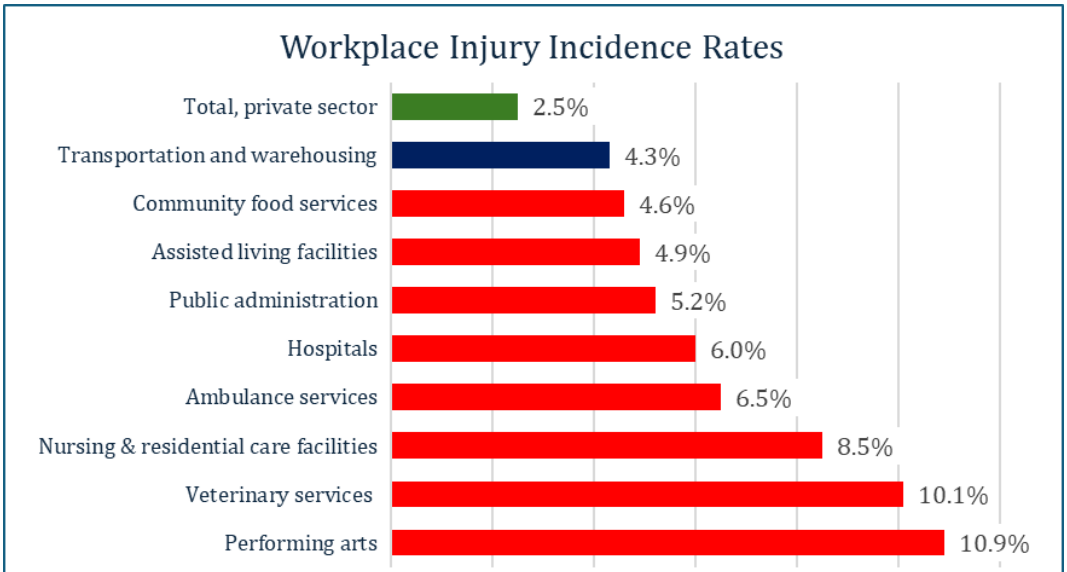
- **Discrimination in hiring.** Many factors can affect warehouse workers' productivity and needs for breaks. If employers can hire and fire people based on who can get the job done, then it is not in their interest to discriminate based on factors that may or may not affect productivity. If, however, employers cannot use productivity quotas that could be considered unsafe for some people and if they must provide access to occupational medical consultations, then it is in their interest to not hire workers with characteristics that correlate with lower productivity, with requiring more breaks, or with greater risks of musculoskeletal disorders requiring ergonomic

[5] In 2001, Congress applied its first use of the Congressional Review Act to overturn OSHA's ergonomics standard and thus prevent issuance of another substantially similar rule in the future unless Congress passes new legislation specifically authorizing it.

accommodations. Consequently, the Warehouse Worker Protection Act could inadvertently cause employers to be less apt to hire people who are older, overweight, disabled, or who might become pregnant.

- **Reduced efficiency.** The federal government's own operations are notoriously inefficient and outdated. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act is designed for the warehouses of 2025, but it is unprepared for the warehouses of 2035 or 2055. Private businesses should not have to wait for an act of Congress to allow them to make changes that would indisputably improve the efficiency of their operations. Outdated, industry-specific legislation that restricts efficiency would have the unintended consequences of reducing compensation for workers and increasing prices for consumers.

- **A slippery slope toward central planning**. The most troubling aspect of the Warehouse Worker Protection Act is the precedent it sets for the federal government to selectively intervene in the details of private business operations. The Warehouse Worker Protection Act is more than a general health and safety law that is equally applicable across the U.S. It gets into very specific details of company operations—thus creating winners and losers out of the workers and employers who are in or outside of the protected industries. Regardless of whether one sees the Warehouse Worker Protection Act as a win for select workers or a loss for targeted employers, the lack of similar bills addressing workers' industry-specific concerns across all other sectors of the economy necessarily makes losers out of unprotected workers and non-targeted employers.



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Data," Table Q6. Incidence rates of total cases of nonfatal occupational injury, by quartile distribution and employment size, 2023, https://www.bls.gov/iif/nonfatal-injuries-and-illnesses-tables.htm (accessed October 3, 2025).

Advocates of the Warehouse Worker Protection Act point to disproportionately high injury rates in warehousing. According to the most recent data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Survey of Occupational Illnesses and Injuries, the rate of injury in transportation and

warehousing is 4.3 percent,[6] compared to 2.5 percent across the entire private sector.[7] If above-average injury rates are used to justify government intervention into business operations, then it would logically follow that government intervention is also warranted in other industries with similar or higher injury rates. A mere sampling of such industries includes: community food services (4.6 percent), assisted living facilities (4.9 percent), public administration (5.2 percent), hospitals (6.0 percent), ambulance services (6.5 percent), nursing and residential care facilities (8.5 percent), veterinary services (10.1 percent); and performing arts (10.9 percent).[8] If similar laws were passed and unique offices created within the Department of Labor to monitor and enforce operations, the U.S. would be well on its way to central planning, or as Friedrich Hayek warned, the road to serfdom.

## Modernizing Labor Laws to Empower Workers Throughout the Evolving Future of Work

The ways Americans work are ever-evolving, from an agrarian society with localized shops to the industrial revolution with large factories and labor unions to the current service-dominated and digitalized world of work. Within just the past decade, the country has experienced an explosion in digital work platforms, huge growth in flexible and remote work options, a massive increase in paid family leave policies, and the rapid onset of artificial intelligence.

Yet, most of America's labor laws were enacted three-quarters of a century ago amidst a male-dominated, union-dominated, and manufacturing-dominated labor market. Today, labor laws and market competition provide workers with most of the rights and opportunities that unions used to offer. As unions failed to adapt by creating new value for workers, unionization rates continued to decline, reaching an all-time low of 9.9 percent of all workers and only 5.9 percent of private-sector workers in 2024.[9] Yet, current labor laws prioritize and cement unions' power even as unions' adversarial tactics that pit employees against employers are counter to the amicable relationships that workers and employers desire. In a competitive global economy, labor laws must recognize that employers and employees are in business together and not in competition against one another.[10]

Americans need modernized labor laws that empower workers, protect their essential rights, and undo outdated restrictions and unnecessary government interventions. The Employee Rights Act and other laws provide this modernization.

**The Employee Rights Act**.[11] The Employee Rights Act includes the following pro-worker and pro-employer provisions that seeks to restore democracy to the workplace:

[6] This corresponds to 4.3 reported injuries per 100 workers per year. The rate for the category of "warehousing and storage" was 4.6 percent.
[7] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Data," Table Q6. Incidence rates of total cases of nonfatal occupational injury, by quartile distribution and employment size, 2023, https://www.bls.gov/iif/nonfatal-injuries-and-illnesses-tables.htm (accessed October 3, 2025).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Members—2024."
[10] Rachel Greszler, "How Voluntary Labor Organizations Can Help Employees and Employers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 6011, September 14, 2020, https://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/report/how-voluntary-labor-organizations-can-help-employees-and-employers.
[11] H.R. 4154, "Employee Rights Act," 119th Congress, introduced June 26, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4154 (accessed October 4, 2025).

- **Safeguards independent work.** In recent years, about 60 million Americans have been performing independent work, including side hustles as well as full-time self-employment, or independent contracting. Yet, independent work is under threat. For example, California imposed a law restricting independent contracting, and it resulted in a 10.5 percent decline in self-employment and a 4.4 percent decline in total employment.[12]

  The Employee Rights Act prevents federal regulators from imposing similar nationwide restrictions by harmonizing and amending the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) to codify the definition of an "employee" based on a worker's level of control over his work and economic dependence on his employer. The similar 21st Century Worker Act[13] and Modern Worker Empowerment Act would establish a single bright-line test, consistent across all federal laws, to determine who is an "employee" and who is an "independent contractor" based on the level of control that individuals have over their work.

- **Protects pathways to entrepreneurship.** Small businesses take many forms. Some–such as subcontractors, staffing and temp agencies, and franchises—have models that are tied to doing business with bigger companies. Franchising, for example, provides a pathway to entrepreneurship through a proven business model that typically includes lower startup costs and significantly more entrepreneur support. Consequently, over 800,000 individual franchise operations provide nearly 9 million jobs across the U.S. The Employee Rights Act, as well as the Save Local Business Act, protects franchises, subcontractors, and staffing agencies by codifying a traditional joint-employer standard under which an employer–employee relationship must include the employer exercising direct, actual, and immediate control over the employee.

- **Preserves the right to secret ballot elections.** Workers voting in union elections should have the same rights as Americans voting in democratic elections, which includes privacy and freedom from intimidation or coercion. The Employee Rights Act would preserve the rights of all workers to cast secret ballot votes in union elections.

- **Protects workers' privacy.** Employers are prohibited from giving or selling employees' personal information to private interest groups, with the exception of unions. The Employee Rights Act would let workers choose which piece of personal information (such as cell phone, email, and home address) their employers provide to the union, and would make it an unfair labor practice for employers to use employees' personal information to contact them about anything other than representation proceedings.

[12] Liya Palagashvili, Paola Suarez, Christopher M. Kaiser, and Vitor Melo, "Assessing the Impact of Worker Reclassification: Employment Outcomes Post-California AB5," Mercatus Center, January 31, 2024, https://www.mercatus.org/research/working-papers/assessing-impact-worker-reclassification-employment-outcomes-post (accessed October 3, 2025).
[13] S. 2159, "21st Century Worker Act," 118th Congress, introduced June 22, 2023, https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-118s2159is/pdf/BILLS-118s2159is.pdf (accessed July 11, 2025).

- **Allows many workers to choose their representation.** Currently, private-sector workers who live in right-to-work states and all public sector workers can choose whether to pay fees to a union; but, even if they do not join or pay the union, they are forced to be represented by it. This is unfair to workers who do not want the union representing them and it is unfair to unions that have to represent workers who do not pay them. The Employee Rights Act and also the Worker's Choice Act[14] would amend the NLRA to allow most private sector workers in right-to-work states to choose their own representation.

- **Lets workers decide if their union dues can be used for politics.** The money that unions take out of workers' paychecks is supposed to be for union representation, but it is often also used for political causes. Currently, workers who do not want their union fees to be used for politics have to go through a complicated and burdensome process every year to seek refunds for political activities that they do not want to support. The Employee Rights Act would create a simpler, worker-centric approach to union politics, requiring unions to receive opt-in permission from workers before using workers' dues for political purposes.

- **Prevents discrimination in union contracts.** Federal law prevents discrimination and union contracts should not be above the law. The Employee Rights Act bars collective bargaining agreements from including mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) provisions.

- **Reserves voting in union elections to U.S. citizens and legally authorized workers.** The Employee Rights Act requires unions to verify the citizenship or work authorization of all employees who vote in a union election.

- **Protects workers from harassing language and violence.** The Employee Rights Act makes it clear that employers can protect their employees from discriminatory, harassing, or demeaning language during a unionizing campaign without that protection constituting a violation of the NLRA. The Employee Rights Act also eliminates a judicially created loophole so that union-related violence and extortion are held to the same standards and penalties as non-union-related violence**.**

In addition to the proposals contained in the Employee Rights Act, the following labor law modernizations would unlock additional benefits and rights for workers:

- **The Unlocking Benefits for Independent Workers Act.**[15] This act would create a safe harbor for companies that do business with independent contractors to offer the contractors benefits without triggering "employee" status.

[14] H.R. 6745, "Worker's Choice Act of 2023," 118th Congress, introduced December 13, 2023, https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/6745 (accessed October 4, 2025).
[15] S.2210, "Unlocking Benefits for Independent Workers Act," 119th Congress, introduced on July 7, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/2210 (accessed July 11, 2025).

- **The Independent Retirement Fairness Act.**[16] This act would expand retirement savings options for independent workers and make it easier for them to save as they move across different jobs.[17]

- **The Association Health Plans Act.**[18] This act would allow independent workers and small businesses to pool together to negotiate collectively so that they can benefit from the lower costs of pooled health insurance.

- **The Rewarding Achievement and Incentivizing Successful Employees (RAISE) Act.**[19] This Act would permit unionized employers to give performance-based raises without union consent so that workers could be rewarded for their hard work. A Heritage Foundation analysis estimated that the RAISE Act could increase the average union member's salary by $2,700 to $4,500 a year.[20]

- **The Start Applying Labor Transparency (SALT) Act**.[21] This Act would require individuals who are paid by unions to get jobs at and encourage union support within workplaces that unions seek to organize to file the same reporting forms as labor consultants hired by employers.[22]

- **The Worker Enfranchisement Act**.[23] This Act ensures that an entire workplace cannot become unionized through the votes of only a small minority of workers. It stipulates that in order for a union to become the exclusive representation for an entire workplace, it must receive the votes of a majority of votes in a secret ballot election in which at least two-thirds of eligible employees vote.[24]

## Summary

America's workforce is dynamic and resilient, with the potential to become even more so. Workers' core priorities—good jobs, upward mobility, and personal freedom—have remained steadfast even

[16] S. 2217, "Independent Retirement Fairness Act," 119th Congress, introduced July 9, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/2217 (accessed July 11, 2025).
[17] For example, the act includes a "suspension account," which is a flexible savings account through which independent workers can save for retirement and later move to a pooled employer retirement plan or a simplified employee pension.
[18] S.1847, "Association Health Plans Act," 119th Congress, introduced on May 22, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1847 (accessed July 11, 2025).
[19] H.R.6952 "RAISE Act," 117th Congress, introduced on March 7, 2022, https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/6952/titles (accessed October 5, 2025).
[20] James Sherk and Ryan O'Donnell, "RAISE Act Lifts Pay Cap on Millions of Workers," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2702, June 19, 2012, https://www.heritage.org/jobs-and-labor/report/raise-act-lifts-pay-cap-millions-american-workers.
[21] H.R. 2952, "SALT Act," 119th Congress, introduced on April 17, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2952 (accessed October 5, 2025).
[22] Institute for the American Worker, "Start Applying Labor Transparency (SALT) Act," updated April 21, 2025, https://i4aw.org/resources/start-applying-labor-transparency-salt-act/ (accessed October 5, 2025).
[23] H.R. 9302, "Worker Enfranchisement Act, " 118th Congress, introduced on August 2, 2024, https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/9302/text (accessed October 5, 2025).
[24] F. Vincent Vernuccio and Bob Onder, "Protect Workers' Right to Vote," National Review, April 2, 2025, https://www.nationalreview.com/2025/04/protect-workers-right-to-vote/ (accessed October 5, 2025).

as technology, demographics, and workplace structures continue to evolve.

Despite seeking to address legitimate concerns, the Faster Labor Contracts Act and the Warehouse Worker Protection Act risk significant unintended consequences for the workers they seek to help. Moreover, the Faster Labor Contracts Act likely violates essential American freedoms, and the Warehouse Worker Protection Act is a slippery slope toward central planning. Rigid timelines, centralized decision-making, and detailed operational dictates would squash individual choice, reduce flexibility, and stifle innovation that drives wage growth. History shows that when the government replaces collaboration with compulsion, both workers and employers lose.

A better way forward is to modernize labor laws in ways that empower workers to decide how, where, and with whom they work. The Employee Rights Act would protect independent work and entrepreneurship, safeguard secret ballot elections and workers' privacy, and defend workers' freedom of association.

Today's challenges—from the rise of artificial intelligence to the expansion of independent work and the growing demand for flexibility, autonomy, and new skills—necessitate modernized labor laws that are pro-worker and pro-employer, regardless of the type of workplace. Heavy-handed government interventions and attempts to bring back the 1950s' ways of work are not the answers. American labor laws should preserve the freedom, dignity, and opportunity that make American work exceptional.

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