

# LET'S PROTECT WORKERS ACT

## LABOR ENFORCEMENT TO SECURELY (LET'S) PROTECT WORKERS ACT

### Employment laws are a promise to our nation's workers.

These laws secure the most basic rights of work in this country, including:

1. People should be able to come home at the end of the day—alive, well, in one piece, and with all the wages they worked hard to earn,
2. Children should be in schools, not dangerous workplaces, and
3. Workers should be able to organize a union without interference or the threat of retaliation from their employers.

### That promise is broken.

Recent shocking revelations about massive increases in the number of children illegally overworked and trafficked into dangerous jobs—just over 85 years since the passage of the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, which was enacted to eliminate that very problem—is the latest example of the ways that this promise to America's workers is broken. Here is a handful of other examples:

- Wage theft robs workers of as much as [\\$50 billion annually](#) and pushes working families [into poverty](#).
- Federal [overtime violations](#) from 2020-2021 exceeded environmental and employment discrimination claims combined.
- Workplace illness and injury cost an [estimated \\$250 billion](#) in 2007—more than \$375 billion today.
- From [2016 to 2021](#), when workers attempted to exercise their rights to form unions, 87 percent of employers waged anti-union campaigns that included threats, interrogation, and surveillance, 75 percent of employers held captive audience meetings, and 16 percent of employers ran anti-union campaigns that fired union organizers.

### The Problem: Weak penalties undermine these basic protections.

Low-road employers brazenly violate workers' rights every day because they know that even if a resource-starved Department of Labor catches a violation, the penalties are a mere [slap on the wrist](#). Some penalties are so low that they can be factored in as just a cost of doing business, and others come with no penalty at all.

### The Solution: The *Labor Enforcement to Securely Protect Workers Act (LET'S Protect Workers Act)* will restore the promise to America's working families.

Workers' lives and well-being are priceless—violations of their protections should not be so cheap for law-breaking employers to pay. Responsibly strengthening these penalties will save workers' lives, prevent disabling injury, protect the welfare of children, safeguard the most vulnerable workers, and undergird the right to organize by raising the cost of noncompliance and deterring violations. The *LET'S Protect Workers Act* will:

- Increase civil monetary penalties for violations of child labor, minimum wage and overtime, worker health and safety, and farmworker protection standards.
- Improve mine safety and reliable funding of black lung benefits through new and increased civil monetary penalties and the option to shut down scofflaw operators.

- Set new penalties for retaliation against workers who exercise their family and medical leave rights.
- Strengthen enforcement of mental health parity requirements for employer-sponsored health plans.
- Close a loophole that allows employers to escape penalties for failing to keep records of workplace injuries if OSHA does not detect the violation within six months.
- Create new penalties for violations of the *National Labor Relations Act*, consistent with the *Protecting the Right to Organize Act*.