



## UNITED STATES CONGRESS

### **FACT SHEET: The Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act**

Real, long-term economic growth comes from the middle out, not the top down, and our government, economy, and workplaces should work for all families, not just the wealthiest few. Collective bargaining rights and unions have been key drivers in economic security, and for decades, unions have helped millions of families climb into the middle class. But over the past few decades, workers' wages have stagnated, and many families struggle to make ends meet. At the same time, too many employers take advantage of weak worker protections to prevent them from advocating for improvements in their workplace. The penalties that are supposed to protect workers do little to deter employers from breaking the law.

*The Workplace Action for a Growing Economy (WAGE) Act* would amend the National Labor Relations Act to strengthen protections for workers who want to organize and promote change through forming a union or other collective action. The WAGE Act would provide stronger protections for all workers, whether they are part of a union or not, who want to talk with their coworkers about equal pay, advocate for safety improvements, or increase wages. The WAGE Act removes perverse incentives for employers to break the law by increasing remedies for workers and would impose new penalties on employers who act illegally. When workers can exercise basic worker rights without interference from their employers, it will expand economic security and help ensure the economy grows from the middle out, not the top down.

*The WAGE Act would strengthen protections for workers and better protect workers' fundamental right to join together with their co-workers and advocate for change by:*

- Tripling the backpay that employers must pay to workers who are fired or retaliated against by their employers, regardless of immigration status.
- Providing workers with a private right of action to bring suit to recover monetary damages and attorneys' fees in federal district court, just as they can under civil rights laws.
- Providing for federal court injunctions to immediately return fired workers to their jobs.
- Ensuring employers will be jointly responsible for violations affecting workers supplied by another employer.

*The WAGE Act would put an end to the perverse incentives for employers to interfere with workers' rights by:*

- Establishing civil penalties up to \$50,000 for employers who commit unfair labor practices and doubled penalties for repeat violations. This would bring the NLRA in line with other workplace laws.
- Giving the National Labor Relations Board authority to impose penalties on officers and directors of employer violators.
- Allowing the Board to issue a bargaining order upon finding that an employer prevented a free and fair election, provided that a majority of employees signed authorization cards within the previous 12 months.
- Setting a 30-day time limit for employers to challenge an NLRB decision, after which the NLRB decision becomes final and binding unless a court directs otherwise. The NLRB could then go directly to district court to enforce its orders.

*This legislation would ensure workers know their rights in the workplace by:*

- Requiring employers to inform workers of their rights under the NLRA by posting a notice developed by the NLRB and informing workers of their rights at the time of hiring.