



National Workers' Rights Board

Jobs with Justice – 1616 P Street NW Suite 150 – Washington, DC 20036 – tel: 202.822.2127 ext. 107 – fax: 202.822.2168 – www.jwj.org

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Harkin and Ranking Member Alexander:

As national and local leaders representing faith, civil rights, social justice, human rights, and academic communities, we believe the strength of our democracy is tied to our nation's ability to uphold and uplift workers' rights. We have witnessed the decline of job standards and shared prosperity due to ever-increasing corporate influence on our democracy, the steady weakening of U.S. labor laws, , and the lack of political will to modernize these laws to accommodate significant shifts in the nature of work.

This country is fundamentally in need of better labor laws and a stronger National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). In the absence of such reforms, it is imperative that America's workers still have government protection in their attempt to secure basic rights and respect from their employers. We are therefore writing to urge swift confirmation of the full package of nominees submitted by President Obama for the NLRB.

In January 2013, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled that the Obama administration's January 2012 recess appointments to the NLRB were unconstitutional – a ruling at odds with other circuit court decisions, but one that put the status of the current NLRB recess appointees, and the full operations of the agency, in legal doubt.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) provided for bedrock rights for workers to join together to improve their standard of living and conditions at work. This protected right to collective action and collective bargaining is as critical to our economy and democracy today as it was in 1935 when the NLRA became law. The NLRB is still where workers turn to when they are fired unfairly, their free speech is threatened, or their working conditions are unsafe. Recent Unfair Labor Practice strikes by Walmart workers and fast food workers across the county show that workers continue to seek collective action to better their jobs and lives.

In order for our labor laws to work effectively and for workers to have the ability to seek redress for workplace injustice, it is essential that the agency responsible for enforcing these laws be operational. Current and future vacancies on the NLRB, together with the uncertainty created by the D.C. Circuit's recent *Noel Canning* decision, make it imperative that the Senate move quickly to consider the full slate of nominees.

America's workers deserve much more than the status quo to fully protect their rights on the job. Yet they do not deserve to have their basic workplace rights invalidated due to Congressional inaction. Please act on the opportunity to approve the nominations and ensure the NLRB will be able to operate, protecting the vital rights of employees to collectively improve their job standards.

Signed,

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