



AMERICA'S UNIONS

## IMMIGRATION

# Holding the Line on Workplace Rights

July 27, 2017

The labor movement strives to make every job in our country a good job. To do that, we must and we will stand with every worker in the fight for basic rights and dignity on the job. We will not allow union members or any workers to lose their rights and status. We will fight for and with them just as they have fought for and with all of us.

More than 1 million working people are in danger of having their work permits stripped away if the Trump administration ends the Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals programs. This is unacceptable. Tens of thousands of dues-paying union members have lived, worked and paid taxes in our country for years under TPS and DACA. The labor movement will fight to extend these crucial protections that offer immigrant workers and their families a measure of stability and allow them to contribute more fully to our economy, our communities and our unions.

Punitive enforcement strategies are forcing a growing number of immigrants and union members to live and work in fear. As arrests, detentions and deportations of working people become more widespread and arbitrary, immigrants of all types face unacceptable risks when they stand up for fair pay, safe conditions or a voice at work. The labor movement objects to this chilling effect on the exercise of basic workplace rights. New federal guidance instructs agencies to pursue all possible prosecutions, even for civil violations, and to deport as many working people as possible, whether or not they have committed a crime. In this enforcement landscape, even long-term legal permanent residents are now at risk of arrest merely for securing required work badges.

As working people in our country continue to struggle for stable jobs and family-sustaining wages, the employer clamor for more captive and exploitable workers continues to grow. The answer to this manufactured crisis in our workplaces is not to replace existing workers with a revolving door of guestworkers who have severely limited rights. We categorically reject this approach. Our country must retain, protect and value the workforce we have now, and ensure that workers who come here in the future will be treated fairly and given the opportunity to truly integrate into our society.

The ability to exploit any worker undermines standards for all. Increasing the pool of vulnerable workers in our country directly threatens the labor movement's mission of raising wages and improving working conditions. We call on our nation's leaders to

reverse the destructive course we are on and take these immediate steps to reduce the fear in our workplaces:

- Defend DACA and protect this vital young workforce;
- Continue TPS for all affected countries;
- Reform, not expand, abusive work visa programs; and
- Protect labor rights by preventing immigration enforcement from interfering with other important roles of government.

The labor movement remains committed to the long-term struggle for comprehensive immigration reforms that promote shared prosperity. To achieve that goal, we must continue to fight for more and better protections for all working people brave enough to speak up against abuse and join together in a union. The same forces pushing “right to work” and gutting our health care also are promoting destructive efforts to criminalize immigrant working people, and we will oppose them at every turn.



AMERICA'S UNIONS

## CIVIL RIGHTS

# Voter Suppression Is the Real Threat to Election Integrity

July 26, 2017

The labor movement believes that ensuring and protecting the right of every citizen to vote is a bedrock principle of our democracy. That is why we are alarmed by the “Presidential Commission on Election Integrity,” which seems to be nothing more than the latest pretext for passing legislation that will make it harder for people to register and vote.

Several of the “election integrity” commission’s members have spent years perpetuating conspiracies and lies about voter fraud and championing efforts that make it harder to vote. President Trump himself, both before and after his election, has made wild and unsubstantiated claims about “illegal voting” and our electoral system being “rigged.”

The commission unfortunately is focused on a problem that does not exist. Our democracy suffers not from voter fraud, but from voter suppression and disenfranchisement. In fact, voter fraud in the United States virtually is nonexistent. One report from the Brennan Center for Justice, “The Truth About Voter Fraud,” noted that it is more likely an American “will be struck by lightning than...impersonate another voter at the polls.”

Even Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, who was tapped to lead this commission, testified before Kansas lawmakers that his review of 84 million votes cast in 22 states yielded only 14 instances of fraud referred for prosecution. This amounts to a 0.00000017% fraud rate.

At best, the efforts to stop so-called voter fraud are misguided and unnecessary. At worst, they are propaganda with roots in some of our nation’s ugliest periods of discrimination designed to deny citizens their constitutional right to vote, particularly people of color, young and first-time voters, and low-income Americans. In the name of “fraud protection,” legislation requiring photo ID, the curtailing of early vote hours, illegal voter purges, the restriction of absentee voting and other disenfranchising practices all have been used to limit eligible voters from exercising their right to vote.

America’s hard-working families and communities deserve better. As a movement of working people, we demand that this type of dangerous approach to governing end, and that a pro-voter agenda be adopted immediately, starting with the restoration of the Voting Rights Act and passage of legislation that expands opportunities for citizens to vote. We applaud the 44 secretaries of state who are withholding some or all of the information requested by the commission. And we join with hundreds of other civic organizations across the political spectrum in calling for real integrity in our democracy, and urge our leaders to expand and protect the right to vote.