

Rep. Norcross floor remarks on *Faster Labor Contracts Act* – 6/9/26

Thank you Mr. Speaker.

I'm a union electrician by trade, and a proud member of IBEW Local 351. I've spent my life fighting for workers to get a fair shake from their employers. So I'm proud to rise in support of what would be the most impactful protection for workers' rights in nearly 100 years: My *Faster Labor Contracts Act*.

Whether it's safer working conditions, better pay, or even something as simple as getting the weekend off from work, unions have been making people's lives better for generations. They do so by winning workers a seat at the table with the executives who control the purse strings. And one of the most important tools a union has to get that seat at the table is the right to collectively bargain.

Workers' right to negotiate their contracts together has been the law of the land for almost a century. Yet for that entire time, there's been a glaring loophole in the system that allows employers to prevent unions from ever securing their first contract. Simply put, workers have no real option if their bosses hold out in negotiations indefinitely.

So that's exactly what employers have done: They've run out the clock.

It can already take a year for workers to win and certify an election to unionize, which is what starts the clock. It then takes an average of 458 days for an employer to agree with a union on their first contract. And that's just the average. Roughly a third of workers are forced to wait over three years before they can sign on the dotted line.

Executives have every incentive to drag out this waiting game. For starters, delaying a new contract ensures that their profits don't have to be shared more equally with workers. Employers also know that if they can hold up negotiations long enough, there's a chance their employees may get frustrated and decide that this process simply isn't worth it. And for the largest corporations, making collective bargaining as painful as possible

might just prevent their other branches from even trying to unionize in the first place.

Let's be clear: Union busting is illegal, and it has been for generations. But with the dirty tactic of indefinite delays, employers are still working relentlessly to kill their employees' unions.

And if you live in America, you've likely crossed paths with the workers who are hurt by their employer's waiting games. I'm talking about the father in the Amazon delivery van dropping off home goods in an ice storm. I'm talking about the young woman at Starbucks who knows your coffee order by heart. The genuinely kind senior bagging your groceries at Trader Joe's, or the hiking expert ready to go the extra mile for you at REI.

Those workers are getting screwed, plain and simple. And many of them are getting screwed by bosses like Jeff Bezos, who in short time have accumulated more wealth than any other human being in history.

At Amazon, the company Bezos helped found, there are currently more than 5,000 warehouse workers in Staten Island who voted to form a union in 2022. For four years, they've been waiting for Amazon to negotiate in good faith. And they're still waiting.

If your partner gave you a ring but refused go to the altar after four years, you'd probably have a problem with that! We'd also have a problem if there wasn't a concrete process for getting the president of the United States certified and sworn in after their election. I believe that workers deserve to hold their employers to those same standards.

So my *Faster Labor Contracts Act* offers a simple, three-step solution to turn endless negotiation delays into fair contracts for workers.

First, following the certification of a union election, it would require employers to begin contract negotiations with their new union within 10 days.

Second, my bill would give workers or employers the choice to refer their negotiations to independent mediation if a new agreement is not reached after 90 days.

Finally, if mediation takes longer than a month, workers or employers could ask an arbitration panel to render a decision on a first contract.

This three-step plan would give both parties multiple opportunities to advance stalled contract discussions if they so choose. Because right now, they have no opportunities if the other side stops negotiating in good faith.

My bill's clear timeline for contract negotiations will ensure workers can start benefitting from their new union contract in months, not years. I'm also confident that not every negotiation will require outside help, because hundreds of employers already do this process the right way each day. The problem employers will just be forced to sit down at the table when they know they're not allowed to run out the clock.

Unions fight for American workers of all political stripes. That's why my *Faster Labor Contracts Act* has attracted bipartisan support. Especially during this nasty era of politics, I'm grateful for those Members on both sides of the aisle who were willing to stand with workers together.

I'm also grateful to my friends in the broader labor movement for long calling out bad faith negotiations by employers. I ask for unanimous consent to submit into the congressional record letters sent to me by several of these partners in support of the *Faster Labor Contracts Act*, including the Teamsters, AFL-CIO, IBEW, Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), Steelworkers (USW), and Machinists (IAM).

The coalition we've built behind the *Faster Labor Contracts Act* bridges political parties, blue- and white-collar industries, the young and the old, and many other walks of life. Our bill reaffirms that collective bargaining is a fundamental right that even the richest billionaires must comply with. And by advancing this legislation, Congress can send a clear message that workers deserve a level playing field – and that organized labor is still capable of bettering the lives of everyone.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I urge my colleagues to vote yes and to move the previous question on the resolution.