



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



Protecting the Civil Service and Federal Union Rights is in the Public Interest

Position: The 119th Congress must act to defend the apolitical, merit-based federal civil service, uphold collective bargaining rights, and protect the mission of federal agencies. A wave of politically driven policy changes, blanket directives, and efforts to weaken unions is undermining the federal workforce's ability to serve the public effectively. Without action, this erosion will harm service delivery, disrupt federal programs, and reduce agency accountability—impacting every American community.

Federal unions are not obstacles—they are partners in good governance. Protecting the civil service, maintaining collective bargaining, and supporting fair workplace policies are not just workforce issues—they are issues of public trust, democratic accountability, and effective government.

For over 60 years, the federal government has recognized that collective bargaining is in the public interest. This principle, established by President Kennedy's 1962 Executive Order 10988 and codified in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, has stood the test of time and partisanship. Federal employee unions do not bargain over pay and benefits (with limited exceptions), but rather over working conditions, workplace safety, and grievance procedures.

Through this process, unions provide a structured channel for employees to collaborate with management, improve operations, implement new technologies, and offer firsthand insight into what agencies need to succeed. They also help agencies remain flexible and responsive while giving Congress valuable perspectives on workforce morale, resource needs, and agency performance.

Legislative Solutions

- 1. Pass the Protecting America's Workforce Act (H.R. 2550)**
Congress must reject any attempt to restrict union rights under the false premise of national security. Instead, lawmakers should affirm that unions enhance government performance and help prevent mismanagement. This is a bipartisan bill.
- 2. Support the Saving the Civil Service Act**
This legislation would prevent any administration from reviving Schedule F or similar schemes that convert apolitical civil service roles into political appointments, undermining due process and public trust. Congress should also monitor attempts to bypass OPM's final rule on upholding merit system principles, finalized April 9, 2024.
- 3. Protect Official Time**
Official Time allows union reps to work with agency managers to resolve issues, improve procedures, and ensure workplace compliance, **not** for internal union business or politics. Weakening it would eliminate a key mechanism for boosting productivity, reducing grievances, and delivering better public service.
- 4. Pass the Federal Labor-Management Partnerships Act (H.R. 7787 / S. 4039, 118th)**
To codify labor-management forums and empower federal employees to partner with agencies for workplace improvements.