



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, IAMAW, AFL-CIO



Protecting the Civil Service and Federal Unions Protects Democracy

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 have been partners in effective governance for more than a century, helping the nation navigate world wars, economic crises, and periods of profound change. Protecting the civil service, preserving collective bargaining, and supporting fair workplace policies are not merely workforce issues—they are matters of public trust, democratic accountability, and good government.

For more than 60 years, the federal government has recognized that collective bargaining serves the public interest. First established by President Kennedy's 1962 Executive Order 10988 and later codified in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978, this principle has endured across administrations of both parties. Unlike private-sector unions, federal employee unions do not negotiate pay or benefits; instead, they focus on working conditions, workplace safety, and fair procedures for resolving disputes.

Through collective bargaining, unions provide a structured mechanism for employees and management to solve problems, improve operations, modernize workplaces, and identify inefficiencies before they become failures. They help agencies remain adaptable and mission-focused while providing Congress with valuable insight into workforce morale, resource needs, operational challenges, and agency performance. In short, federal unions strengthen accountability, improve government effectiveness, and help ensure that public services are delivered efficiently and in the public interest.

Protect America's Workforce Act – H.R. 2550 / S. 2837

This bipartisan legislation, which passed the House in 2025, is aimed at restoring federal workers' lawful collective bargaining rights that were illegally targeted by President Trump's executive order, which unilaterally ended collective bargaining with federal unions in direct violation of current law.

Saving the Civil Service Act – H.R. 492 / S. 134

Prohibits the forced conversion of career federal employees to political appointments under Schedule PC (political-career) authorities.

1. Prevents an unlimited number of political operatives without term limits, and
2. Preserves the integrity, accountability, and nonpartisan administration of the civil service.

Official Time is a management tool, not a union perk.

It enables union representatives to collaborate with agency management to resolve workplace issues, improve operations, and ensure compliance with workplace laws and agreements. It cannot be used for union business or political activity and is authorized and supervised by management. Weakening Official Time would undermine a proven tool for improving productivity, reducing disputes, and strengthening public service delivery.