

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS



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LEGISLATIVE ALERT!

(202) 637-5057

June 1, 2012



Dear Senator:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to oppose the RAISE Act (S. 3221), a bill that would destroy the institution of collective bargaining through which companies and workers come together to negotiate the terms and conditions of employment. It is a process that has worked well to raise the living standards of millions of workers over many decades.

The misnamed RAISE Act, sponsored by Senator Rubio, would give one party – the employer – the right to ignore a negotiated and ratified agreement and grant pay increases to selected employees in the bargaining unit. The bill would thus undermine our system of privately bargained agreements that are legally binding, and instead, permit companies to violate their contracts with workers and ignore agreed upon wage and benefits for any reason, or for no reason.

Under current law, unions and employers can agree to link pay increases and bonuses to performance and many collective bargaining agreements do, in fact, provide for merit-based pay increases. Nothing in this bill, however, ties pay or benefit improvements in any way to individual achievement or success; rather, it eliminates current built-in protections against favoritism and arbitrary action by companies.

The bill would destroy the gains of decades of collective bargaining which has significantly reduced racial and gender inequality in wages and benefits. The evidence is clear: workers of all communities have a fairer workplace when they have a collective bargaining agreement that is respected and that is enforceable.

For over 80 years, collective bargaining has been America's route to the middle class. Please vote against S. 3221 to protect this basic right.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director
Government Affairs Department