

4 February 2026

By email

To Members of Parliament,

**Protect workers' rights: Vote against the Employment Relations Amendment Bill
(Bill no 175-2)**

1. The above Bill is due to be voted on in Parliament. It is crucial that it be defeated. It is not too late for this to be achieved. If passed into law, the Bill will greatly accelerate a widespread destruction of crucial worker rights. Such rights are already significantly limited and abridged in New Zealand. The Bill will destroy the central fabric of those that still remain.
2. For many decades, it has been unlawful here to dismiss a worker unjustly. This is a fundamental rule of existing employment law. The Bill alters that approach beyond recognition. It does this in two ways.
3. The first is to substantially abolish most of the remedies available for unjustified dismissals. Currently the Courts consider all of the circumstances, which usually involve minor fault by the employee outweighed by large fault by the employer. The changed law will remove any effective remedies in such a case. Under the proposed amendment any worker fault will deprive an employee of the right to a compensation remedy or to reinstatement. This is a sharp, sudden and drastic reduction in employee rights. If the employee's conduct is "serious" misconduct, there is no remedy at all – regardless of any behaviour by the employer.
4. The second main change is even worse. Currently the law provides that employers and employees cannot "contract out" of employment rights. On this approach, if the real nature of the relationship is employment, rights such as annual holidays, sick pay, maternity leave, public holidays must apply. Employers cannot avoid worker entitlements by re-labelling employees as contractors. That rule is substantially abolished by the Bill. This is also a sharp, sudden and drastic reduction in employee rights. The Bill allows employers to insist on a contractual clause which states he or she is not an employee. It does so in a way that will abolish worker rights completely and immediately in some industries and will lead to the destruction of rights in many others over time.
5. The overall picture is that of a sudden and direct diminishing of worker rights on a national scale, in circumstances in which the starting point is already inadequate. These changes will greatly strengthen the already powerful hand of large employers, and the social consequences are profound.

6. The Bill has many other failings, including proposing arrangements removing all dismissal rights relating to senior well-paid employees, so that they cannot access any Court at all. Collective agreement rights are altered to protect employers, and specific provisions to assist companies such as Uber are included.
7. The Bill must be stopped and can be stopped.
8. The New Zealand Law Society Te Kāhui Ture o Aotearoa has called for changes to the Bill and highlighted the likelihood of it failing to achieve its objectives. The Law Association of New Zealand's Employment Law Committee has strongly recommended that the Bill be substantially revised and that key proposals should either be removed or replaced with more principled, evidence-based alternatives.
9. Unions, law firms, academics and practitioners are united in their criticism of almost all aspects of this Bill. The legal profession agrees that there are fundamental flaws with this legislation that will lead to undesirable outcomes. Some 3,400 submissions opposed the Bill compared to 34 submissions in favour. Despite this, the Bill is progressing through the House largely unchanged, with errors in logic and fairness unaddressed.
10. We ask that all MPs vote against this Bill.

Ngā mihi nui,

New Zealand Council of
Trade Unions Te Kauae
Kaimahi

Young Workers Resource
Centre

Gordon Anderson
Professor Emeritus

New Zealand Education
Institute Te Riu Roa

Gen Z Aotearoa

Max Harris
Barrister

Public Service Association

Youth Employability
Aotearoa

Kathryn Dalziel
Barrister

Post Primary Teachers
Association

Pay Equity Coalition
Aotearoa

Teana Tuiono
Green Party MP |
Workplace Relations and
Safety Spokesperson

HW Hon Andrew Little
Mayor of Wellington
Former Minister for
Workplace Relations and
Safety

Hon Jan Tinetti
Labour Party MP |
Workplace Relations and
Safety Spokesperson

Hon Carmel Sepuloni
Labour Party MP |
Former Minister for
Workplace Relations and
Safety

New Zealand Nurses
Organisation

Action Station

Hon Michael Wood
Former Workplace
Relations and Safety
Minister

E tū

Armstrong Thompson
Barristers and Solicitors

Dr Erling Rasmussen
Former Professor

Association of Salaried
Medical Specialists

YWCA Tāmaki Makaurau

Glenn Barclay

UNITE Union

Aotearoa Women's Watch
New Zealand

Dr Zoë Port
Lecturer in Management

Rail and Maritime
Transport Union

New Zealand Professional
Firefighters Association

Saunoamali'i Dr Karanina
Sumeo

Workers First Union

Maritime Union of New
Zealand

David Tappin
Professor of Sustainable
Work

Te Hautū Kahurangi
Tertiary Education Union

New Zealand Tramways &
Public Transport
Employees Union

Katherine Ravenswood
Professor of Industrial
Relations

Postal Workers Union of
Aotearoa

Dairy Workers Union Te
Runanga Waiū

Irena Brorens

Tertiary Institutes Allied
Staff Association

Taxpro

Independent Schools
Education Association

Equity New Zealand

New Zealand Writers Guild

Midwifery Employee
Representation and
Advisory Service

National Union of Public
Employees

Directors and Editors Guild
of Aotearoa New Zealand

New Zealand Merchant
Service Guild

National Council of
Women New Zealand