

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

Teanau 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		