

May 7, 2024

Illinois Steelworkers: Stand Up for Workers' Rights!

When Illinois voters [passed the Workers' Rights Amendment in 2022](#), they made it clear that workers' rights come first. When we get momentum, we take opportunity in it. That's why our next priority is the [Illinois Worker Freedom of Speech Act, SB 3649](#), a bill that is currently moving through the Illinois General Assembly.

The legislation tackles the growing problem of employer-run "captive audience" meetings where an employer shares their political or religious views with employees who are forced to attend. Meetings often include anti-union rhetoric in an attempt to derail organizing drives. This bill would ban these meetings.



The Facts on "Captive Audience" Meetings:

- The union membership rate of public-sector workers (32.5 percent) is more than five times higher than the rate of private-sector workers (6.0 percent). The data shows us that "captive audience" meetings are far more likely to occur in the private sector and contribute to low unionization rates.
- 89% of all employers conduct "captive audience" meetings in response to union drives.
- "Captive audience" meetings caused the average union election win rate to fall as low as 47%.

Management uses every tactic possible to scare workers from unionizing. When workers decline to participate in these meetings, there is nothing that prevents them from being fired or disciplined. [To stop this, we need to follow the lead of the six other states who have passed similar bills to protect workers' rights.](#)

Take Action Today!

The Illinois Worker Freedom of Speech Act, SB 3649, recently passed the Senate. We now need to get cosponsors in the House. There are two ways you can help – you can either call or email your Representative in Springfield and ask them to cosponsor this legislation.

Make a call! - Click [HERE \(usw.to/4ze\)](http://usw.to/4ze) to use the online tool to call your Representative. Tell them who you are, where you live, and ask them to cosponsor the Illinois Worker Freedom of Speech Act, SB 3649.

Send an Email! – Click [HERE \(usw.to/4zz\)](http://usw.to/4zz) to send a prewritten email to your Representative asking them to cosponsor SB 3649.

For additional questions about this issue or ways to get involved in Rapid Response, contact Jerome Davison, USW District 7 Rapid Response Coordinator, at (219) 617-5338 or jdavison@usw.org.