



THE VOICE of BUSINESS

March 8, 2021

Dear Members of the Virginia Congressional Delegation:

**As President & CEO of the Virginia Chamber, I am following up directly to emphasize my strong concern to the PRO Act, as the Commonwealth has long operated on the bipartisan understanding that its right-to-work law helps the state's economy thrive and protects workers' choice.** Since 1947, Virginia has held its status as one of the first right-to-work states in the country. There are now 27 right-to-work states including West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Kentucky, which became right-to-work states in the past four years. Virginia's major employers have maintained constructive relationships with organized labor organizations and, in fact, in 2017, I worked with Sean McGarvey, President of North America's Building Trades Unions to craft an op-ed expressing our mutual goal to support projects that would bring more well-paying jobs to the Commonwealth.

In December 2017, the Virginia Chamber released Blueprint Virginia 2025, a strategic plan outlining the business community's recommendations for ensuring sustained business investment and economic growth across the Commonwealth. Developed in coordination with over 6,000 businesses, Blueprint Virginia supports commonsense programs that create mutual support between businesses and employees, as well as initiatives that enhance work-based learning opportunities. Blueprint Virginia supports Virginia's existing right-to-work law and opposes federal – and state – efforts to repeal these protections, which would create an unpredictable and anti-business regulatory climate.

Unfortunately, the PRO Act would repeal the protections provided by right-to-work laws from an employee and business perspective. Right-to-work laws do not prohibit unions from organizing, and the National Labor Relations Act protects the rights of workers in right-to-work states to unionize. If the PRO Act were to pass and right-to-work protections were to disappear, unions could negotiate contracts that force workers to pay dues or a fee for not participating in their membership as a condition of employment. While not only creating a predictable regulatory climate, right-to-work laws protect freedom of choice by preserving workers' ability to join or not join a union, and it is critical that these safeguards are protected for all workers and businesses moving forward.

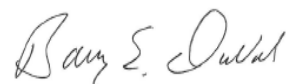
**Below I have included the concerns shared by our coalition to continue to emphasize the severe unintended consequences of this legislation:**

- Eliminate all state Right-to-Work laws, which protect workers in more than half the country against being fired if they decline to pay union dues.
- Prevent workers from decertifying a union even if they are unhappy with it.
- Undermine private ballot union representation elections—a fundamental worker right since 1935.
- Deny individuals the ability to work independently, threatening the emerging “gig” economy and taking away the flexibility that has allowed American businesses of all sizes to grow.
- Allow unions to launch protests and pickets against any employer, even those that have nothing to do with a labor dispute.
- Impose liability on businesses for workplaces they do not control and workers they don’t employ.
- Impose mandatory union contracts if a union and employer do not reach an agreement and deprive workers of the right to vote on the terms and conditions of their own employment.
- Increase class action lawsuits by restricting alternate, less disruptive means of dispute resolution in the workplace.

For these reasons, I encourage you to consider the economic impact this legislation could have on job creation, business investment, and innovation in Virginia and respectfully urge you to not support the PRO Act and stand with employees’ right to free choice. I look forward to working with you on other issues that affect Virginia workers and the business community.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Best regards,



Barry DuVal  
President & CEO