



Action Alert: Defend Your Right to Collective Bargaining

Take Action!

- Contact your state legislators
- Write an editorial to your local newspaper
- Make your colleagues aware that collective bargaining rights are under attack

Other Ohio Bills to Watch

HB 69 - (Rep. Wachtmann)
& SB 3 - (Sen. Faber)
- Makes changes to the five (5) statewide public pension plans, including STRS.

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Ohio State Senator Seeks to Abolish Collective Bargaining for Public Employees

On February 1, Ohio State Senator Shannon Jones (R-Springboro) introduced Senate Bill 5, legislation that would prohibit public employees, *including faculty at state universities and colleges*, from collective bargaining. The bill would abolish democratically negotiated salary schedules and replace them with a merit-based pay system.

Newly elected Ohio Governor John Kasich, along with many new and returning state legislators in the Ohio General Assembly, have been gearing up to dis-

mantle Ohio's 1983 Collective Bargaining provision for months. They believe that one of the keys to economic recovery, and producing a balanced state budget, is to completely remove collective bargaining rights, including binding arbitration and the ability to strike over contract disputes. They would replace these rights with at-will hiring practices and merit pay increases.

The data show that eradicating collective bargaining rights will not improve a state's economic climate. This is merely an attempt to

curtail the power of unions in Ohio.

Fortunately, the OCAAUP was on top of this issue and has already begun aligning with other public employee unions in the state, like the AFL-CIO, AFSCME, OEA, and OFT.

The OCAAUP will actively monitor this legislation as it unfolds. We will educate and lobby key legislators and encourage all AAUP members to get involved by engaging their representatives and local media.

The Real Facts About Collective Bargaining

- The nine (9) states with *no* collective bargaining rights for any public employees face an average budget shortfall of 16.5% in the current fiscal year, while the 15 states with collective bargaining for *all* public employees face an average budget shortfall of 16.2%. Clearly, the right of public workers to unionize is not driving the fiscal crises in states.
- Public employee compensation still trails private sector counterparts. State and local government workers make, on average, 4% less than similar private sector workers. The assertion that public employees wages and benefits are "too generous" does not hold up.
- Arbitration laws have modest to no effect on wages and benefits, and they have significantly curtailed the number of strikes. Studies show that there is little difference between salary schedules and contract terms that are the product of arbitration versus voluntary negotiations.

Dos and Don'ts: Talking to Your Legislator

The two biggest concerns on Ohio legislators' minds are the state budget deficit and the economy. Government officials supportive of abolishing collective bargaining believe that this will reduce government expenses and make Ohio more competitive economically. It is important when writing to your legislator, or better yet, talking to them in person, that you make sure they know the real facts.

DO Discuss...

- The facts. Statistics show that the right of public workers to unionize, as well as arbitration laws, are not driving Ohio's budget crisis or economic hardships.
- How your union has contributed to the well-being of your college/university.
- Better solutions to Ohio's financial woes, like consolidating services.

DON'T Discuss...

- Political undertones. Don't accuse your legislator of playing politics or question their motives.
- Unrelated topics (don't get sidetracked or let your legislator change topics).
- Employers as the bad guys.



Need to find out who represents you in Columbus?
Visit www.legislature.state.oh.us and type in your zip code.

And go to <http://www.ocaaup.org/union-defense-kit.php>
to find out how you can join the discussion on collective bargaining

Dos and Don'ts: Talking to the Media and Public

The battle over collective bargaining rights largely will take place in the public arena. As a result, it is of critical importance that we bring the most effective message to the public. Intensive research conducted in the Midwest showed that the public does not want to be engaged in a policy debate. The public will, however, respond to messages about this being another "attack on the middle class." Consequently, in letters to the editor, radio interviews, or TV appearances, it is best to make a more personal, heartfelt appeal that focuses on how collective bargaining is good for everyone, not just those who directly benefit.

DO Discuss...

- This as an attack on the middle class. Unions improve standards and wages for *all* working families.
- Politicians as hypocrites. Our state legislators are public employees, too, yet they have not taken any reduction in wages or benefits. In fact, many of them voted against cutting their own pay during the last General Assembly.
- The negative impact on some of the most important professions in our society, including teachers, nurses, police officers, and firefighters.

DON'T Discuss...

- Complex policy details. But be armed with the important facts.
- Why you or your colleagues personally benefit from collective bargaining.
- Your union as different or better than any other public employee union. **Stay united.**
- Disputes with your employer. Focus on how collective bargaining agreements help to build consensus.