

## Labor Reform Bill

A group of prominent black leaders called upon the Senate to approve the Labor Law Reform bill without crippling amendments, saying that "its adoption is of vital importance for all minority and low-income workers."

Signers of the statement include NAACP Executive Director Benjamin Hooks, Urban League President Vernon Jordan, Coretta Scott King, Newark Mayor Kenneth Gibson, Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher, Dorothy Height and over 60 other black leaders.

Although a clear majority of Senators support the reform legislation, the bill was blocked by a conservative filibuster in the Senate. Unable to muster the necessary 60 votes to end debate, the Senate leadership returned the bill to the Senate Human Resources Committee.

"Once again the conservative forces in the Senate have resorted to minority rule the Senate have resorted to minority rule in obstructing legislation beneficial to black people," civil rights leader Bayard Rustin declared.

Rustin, who heads the A. Philip Randolph institute, pledged to continue the fight for labor law reform. "Our 180 local affiliates are urging their Senators to support the bill again when it reaches the Senate floor in July. This legislation is far from dead," Rustin said.

The full text of the statement and a partial list of signers is attached.

### STATEMENT ON LABOR LAW REFORM

Civil rights and economic opportunity are interdependent. Black Americans must successfully meet the challenge of securing fundamental economic rights if we are to survive. For us, these economic rights include job security, just wages, and protection from arbitrary managerial power.

In the struggle for economic rights, workers cannot -- and should not -- rely on employer or governmental benevolence. There is only one dignified and time-tested course of action: workers must have a fair opportunity to organize themselves into effective trade unions for the purpose of bargaining with their employers.

On this matter, we share the sentiments so eloquently expressed by that great civil rights and labor leader, A. Philip Randolph. On the occasion of his 89th birthday, Mr. Randolph reminded us that "without a fair system of industrial jurisprudence as provided by a strong union contract, the worker -- weather black or white -- is little better than a slave in his relationship with management."

We realize that the National Labor Relations Act guarantees all workers the right to organize. But for an increasing number of workers that guarantee has become a fraud. By exploiting weaknesses in the NLRA, some employers have successfully -- and profitably -- circumvented the intent of the law. Harassment of workers, long election delays, and out-right refusal to bargain have now become widely-accepted -- but certainly illegal labor relations policies for a significant number of employers. Because of these unfortunate trends, it is necessary to strengthen our labor laws, and thereby reinforce the right of every worker to freely accept or reject union representation.

The United States Senate is presently considering the Labor Law Reform Act of 1977 which was passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives last year. We believe that this legislation is a fair and modest effort to adjust the current imbalances in our labor relations system. Its adoption is of vital importance for all minority and low income workers, and therefore we urge the Senate to approve the Labor Law Reform Act without crippling amendments.

Partial list of the signers of the Labor Law Reform Statement:

ALEXANDER J. ALLEN, Deputy executive Director, National Urban League

HAZEL N. DUKES, N.Y.S. Conference of Branches, N.A.A.C.P.

HON. MERVYN M. DYMALLY, Lieutenant

Governor, California

LEON L. HARRIS, President, Village-Chelsea N.A.A.C.P.

DOROTHY HEIGHT, President, National Council of Negro Women  
AARON E. HENRY, President, Mississippi N.A.A.C.P.

BENJAMIN L. HOOKS, Executive Director, N.A.A.C.P.


VERNON E. JORDAN, JR. President, National Urban League

CORETTA SCOTT KING, President, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Social Change

CLARENCE MITCHELL, President, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights


REV. ROY L. THOMPSON, Executive Administrator, Council on Economic Development and Empowerment for Black People

JULIAN BOND, Georgia State Senator




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