



# Office of the City Clerk

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## Legislation Text

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### OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF CHICAGO

LORI E. LIGHTFOOT  
MAYOR

April 15, 2021

TO THE HONORABLE, THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE  
CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I transmit herewith, together with Alderwoman Garza, a resolution calling on the Illinois General Assembly to place the Workers' Rights Amendment on the ballot on November 8, 2022.

Your favorable consideration of this resolution will be appreciated.

Very truly yours.

### **RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, Chicago is the hometown of the American Labor Movement with a deep labor history and strong union support to his day;

WHEREAS, workers and activists in Chicago and across the United States have suffered violent attacks with many individuals sacrificing their life in support of workers' rights and labor unions;

WHEREAS, Chicagoans have fought and died for the benefits workers enjoy today, from the fight for the eight hour work day in 1886, to the Pullman Strike in 1894, to the Little Steel Strike of 1937 and the Great Postal Strike of 1970, and many more, the fight for workers' rights continues;

WHEREAS, there has been a concerted effort by corporate interests and some government entities to silence

working Americans through relentless attacks on collective bargaining and labor unions throughout the country;

WHEREAS, Wisconsin was the first state in the United States to provide collective bargaining rights to public employees in 1959. However, in 2011 then-Governor Scott Walker signed Act 10 into law effectively eliminating public sector collective bargaining, a change which led to pay decreases and a sharp decline in union membership throughout the state;

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31, et al.*, struck down a 41-year history of unions supporting all workers through the collection of dues, now allowing "free riders" to receive services, benefits, and representation without paying for them;

WHEREAS, 27 states now have so-called "right to work" (RTW) laws, several of which are cemented into their state constitutions despite a recent Gallup poll finding that almost 65% of Americans approve of labor unions;

WHEREAS, since 2012, RTW laws have been passed in Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Kentucky

WHEREAS, RTW laws are increasing nationwide at a time when wealth disparity is rapidly expanding;

WHEREAS, this year, the Tennessee General Assembly has advanced legislation designed to enshrine RTW in its state constitution and the Missouri General Assembly is once again contemplating enacting RTW, just one year after the voters of Missouri overwhelmingly rejected the measure;

WHEREAS, Illinois and Chicago workers are not impervious to attacks on their rights;

WHEREAS, former-Governor Bruce Rauner weaponized the executive branch against organized labor in Illinois and pushed for the passage of local RTW laws;

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WHEREAS, former-Gov. Rauner held the budget hostage for two years, targeting our teachers, first responders, and caregivers, causing lasting damage and disproportionately affecting our most vulnerable to satisfy a personal vendetta against labor unions;

WHEREAS, RTW laws undermine workers' freedom to band together and speak with a more powerful voice;

WHEREAS, working people in RTW states earn lower wages and are significantly less likely to have employer-sponsored health insurance or retirement benefits;

WHEREAS, RTW laws are associated with up to an 8.2 percent decrease in worker earnings while union membership is correlated with an approximately 12 to 13 percent increase in earnings and creates a positive effect on the wages of non-union workers;

WHEREAS, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. remarked that "[i]n our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work.' It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone... We do not intend to let them do this to us. We demand this fraud

be stopped.";

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Chicago City Council does hereby call on the Illinois Speaker of the House, Illinois Senate President, and the other members of the Illinois General Assembly to place the Workers' Rights Amendment on the ballot to be voted upon by the people of the State of Illinois at the General Election to be held November 8, 2022.