



# What is the Workers' Rights Amendment?

The Workers' Rights Amendment (WRA) will be the first item on voters' ballots in the November election. If passed, the WRA will amend the Illinois Constitution to guarantee the fundamental rights of workers to unionize and collectively bargain.

**Put simply, the Workers' Rights Amendment would guarantee the rights of workers to bargain for safe working conditions and fair pay and benefits.**

## How will the Workers' Rights Amendment protect my rights?

The WRA would prohibit Illinois from passing any state law (and any municipality from passing a local ordinance) "that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively over their wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety." That means **the WRA would prohibit the passage of any so-called "right-to-work" laws in our state, which are designed to reduce workers' rights and benefit big corporations.** Neighboring states (Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin) with these laws have seen reduced hourly wages (by 3 percent) and a lag in economic growth.

## I'm a union member, so my rights are protected by my contract. Why should I care about the Workers' Rights Amendment?

Union members receive benefits and protections in contracts bargained between the union and employer. But as we've seen in Illinois and other states, anti-union lawmakers and big corporations (for example, Bruce Rauner, Ken Griffin, and the Koch brothers) have tried to undermine or eliminate your right to collectively bargain. **By passing the WRA, we can permanently enshrine the fundamental right to collectively bargain in the Illinois Constitution.**

## Will the Workers' Rights Amendment help schools and students?

**Yes!** The Workers' Rights Amendment empowers educators and school staff to put students first by negotiating for smaller class sizes, improved technology for students, and additional classroom resources. These things have been proven to increase student learning, help teachers teach, and improve our schools.

## Does the Workers' Rights Amendment change Illinois' labor laws?

**The amendment does not change our state's current labor laws,** it only creates a constitutional floor for collective bargaining that will prevent future attacks on workers' rights like those we've seen in many other states.

## How will the Workers' Rights Amendment help the economy?

Union contracts guarantee fair treatment for all, including equal pay for people of color and women. When people can secure good jobs with fair pay, that boosts local economies. **The WRA will put more money in families' bank accounts and strengthen our communities by building the middle class.** This benefits everyone, both union and non-union workers alike.

## Will the Workers' Rights Amendment increase my property taxes?

**No.** Workers don't determine property tax rates. Opponents of the WRA are trying to scare voters by saying the WRA will increase property taxes. What the WRA will do is guarantee the rights of workers to bargain for fair wages and benefits. This means Illinois families would be better able to afford the rising cost of everything from gas to groceries to property taxes.

## How will the Workers' Rights Amendment improve public health and safety?

The WRA will keep workers and our communities safe by protecting their right to speak up about dangerous situations without fear of being fired. Unsafe construction, food safety issues, and dangerously low hospital staffing are threats to everyone when workers are afraid to report these conditions.

## When can I vote for the Workers' Rights Amendment?

**On Tuesday, November 8, 2022, Illinois voters will have the opportunity to vote YES to protect worker rights.** (You can also vote early in-person in many communities beginning September 29 or apply to vote by mail. Learn more about how you can vote at [ift-aft.org/vote](http://ift-aft.org/vote).)

## How can I get involved?

In the weeks ahead, please watch for more information about how we can pass the Workers' Rights Amendment.

## How will the Workers' Rights Amendment appear on your ballot?

**The WRA will be the first item on your ballot.** You will be asked should the Illinois Constitution be amended to add a new section to the Bill of Rights Article of the Illinois Constitution that would guarantee workers the fundamental right to organize and to bargain collectively and to negotiate wages, hours, and working conditions, and to promote their economic welfare and safety at work. **To support the Workers' Rights Amendment vote "Yes" on the question.**

**Let's help Illinois' working women and men access good jobs and secure a respected voice in their workplaces!**



Illinois Federation of Teachers  
A Union of Professionals

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**For more information about the Workers' Rights Amendment, please visit [ift-aft.org/wra](http://ift-aft.org/wra) or contact your field service director.**