

AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

August 18, 2021

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I urge you to cosponsor H.R. 1948, the VA Employee Fairness Act of 2021. This bill, introduced by Rep. Mark Takano, takes the common sense step of making sure that the healthcare professionals who treat our veterans are able to bargain over the issues that affect their work and their families' lives.

Under current law, certain clinical professionals in the Veterans Health Administration (VA) like registered nurses, dentists, and doctors, among others, are unable to bargain over critical issues like direct patient care and compensation. This limitation on bargaining rights not only runs counter to the principles of a fair economy for workers, but also cuts out workers' ability to voice their concerns over the practices that impact patients most.

The best way to ensure positive outcomes for all stakeholders - the VA, workers, and patients - is to make sure that those closest to the work and the day-to-day needs of patients are able to communicate those best practices at the bargaining table. The VA Employee Fairness Act will ensure that our government no longer operates a tiered system of workers' rights and that clinical professionals enjoy the same rights as other federal employees.

As we work to realize President Biden's commitment to encourage the practice of collective bargaining, Congress should be sure to include all workers in that goal, regardless of their position or employer. And as the VA works to fill the stunning number of current vacancies, we must simultaneously work to ensure that the employees filling those vacancies will have full access to union representation and collective bargaining rights.

For these reasons, we encourage you to co-sponsor the VA Employee Fairness Act today.

Sincerely,



William Samuel
Director, Government Affairs