

United Campaign

to Repeal the Anti Trade Union Laws

FOR TRADE UNION FREEDOM

**Article: “Reclaim our Rights! – Lobby Your
MP for Amendments to the Employment
Bill”**

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Reclaim our Rights! – Lobby Your MP for Amendments to the Employment Bill

The United Campaign has launched a postcard campaign in support of amendments to the Employment Bill. Please download a model letter from our website at www.unitedcampaign.org.uk, or contact us at info@unitedcampaign.org.uk for copies of the postcard. We are hoping to reach as many of our supporters as possible in the short space of time that we have.

The card is for your MP. The Employment Bill will be back before the Commons soon after Parliament resumes on 6 October. We need to fill MPs postbags with as many cards and letters as possible to raise the profile of the amendments. They are a step forward to reclaiming the fundamental trade union rights recognised in every significant human rights treaty and constitution put in place since World War II.

The rights for everyone to form effective trade unions, with the ability to engage in collective bargaining and to withdraw labour, have been recognised as fundamental in international law – including Treaties ratified by the UK and binding on it. But these have been seriously eroded particularly in the UK to such an extent that unions are almost powerless to prevent the growth of poverty and inequality. Pay and pensions do not keep pace with inflation and are falling in value. Dignity and equality in the workplace are under pressure. Democracy suffers.

Yet the fundamental legitimacy of collective rights cannot be denied. The Canadian Supreme Court, only last year said: “Recognizing that workers have the right to bargain collectively as part of their freedom to associate reaffirms the values of dignity, personal autonomy, equality and democracy that are inherent in the Canadian [Constitution].”

The European Court of Human Rights (also last year), in deciding that the UK law that forbade unions from expelling fascists was in breach of the European Convention, held that the Convention protects “the right of trade unions to draw up their own rules and to administer their own affairs.”

The United Campaign continues to promote the issues contained in the TUC backed Trade Union Rights and Freedoms Bill which the government failed to support last year. The trade union movement now has the opportunity for positive amendments to the Employment Bill, currently in Parliament. Everyone can help by spreading our postcard

campaign encouraging MPs to support amendments and following the Campaign as events unfold.

We understand that there may be three areas of the Employment Bill which can be amended to strengthen trade union rights. These would provide for:

1. Better protection against dismissal or victimisation of workers taking part in lawful industrial action.
2. Filling loopholes in the law to prevent the use of agency workers replacing striking workers
3. Fairer balloting procedures cutting the 'red tape' that unions face when balloting members for industrial action by placing a duty on employers to supply information that trade unions need to comply with notice and balloting requirements.

There may be more. The three listed are moderate in the extreme. Whilst we all appreciate that, if enacted, they would still not be enough for the UK to come into compliance with the international conventions on labour rights which it has ratified, the amendments would still be a significant step towards that goal.

Please support the campaign by sending a postcard or a letter to your MP or you can write to them via the website at www.writetothem.com. Order more postcards from info@unitedcampaign.org.uk or download a model letter from our website at www.unitedcampaign.org.uk.