



## IATSE FEDERAL ISSUE AGENDA

### **Protect the right to organize, expand collective bargaining rights, and eliminate so-called “right-to-work” laws**

Labor unions are under assault, with policies across the country undermining workers’ collective bargaining rights and stripping union workers of the wages, benefits, and retirement security they deserve. We must strengthen the federal laws that protect workers’ right to organize a union and bargain for higher wages and better benefits.

- **Pass the Richard L. Trumka Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act ([H.R. 20](#) / [S. 567](#))**
- **Increase funding for the National Relations Labor Board**

### **Restore tax fairness for union creative professionals**

The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act eliminated Unreimbursed Employee Expenses as a tax deduction. W-2 workers lost the ability to deduct expenses, often significant, like our equipment, travel for work, and even union dues. This meant an industrywide tax increase for working class, union creative professionals.

- **Pass the Performing Artist Tax Parity Act ([H.R. 2871](#)) to update the Qualified Performing Artist tax deduction**
- **Pass the Tax Fairness for Workers Act ([H.R. 4963](#) / [S. 738](#)) to restore the tax deductibility of union dues and expenses**
- **Pass the No Tax Breaks for Union Busting Act ([H.R. 5456](#) / [S. 737](#)) to end tax breaks for companies that union bust**

### **Enforce strong copyright laws to protect creative content**

Fighting online piracy and enforcing copyright obligations are critical to our members. While we do not own the copyrights to the works we help create, our livelihoods depend on contractual residuals paid to our health and pension plans when the copyrights for those audiovisual works are licensed to others over the life of a work. The theft of copyrighted works – domestically and internationally – threatens our hard-won health care benefits and retirement security. Outdated and overbroad copyright safe harbor provisions allow stolen or otherwise illegitimate content to proliferate on the online platforms of giant multinational corporations, cutting into the revenues that provide for our health and pension benefits.

- **Reform Section 512 of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) to restore balance between content creators and online platforms and ensure that creative professionals can earn a fair return for their work**
- **Exclude overbroad copyright safe harbor provisions, like DMCA Section 512, from all future U.S. trade agreements**

### **Establish safeguards to ensure the fair and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) tools**

Generative AI and ML technologies, if left unchecked, represent the next frontier of large-scale online piracy. Absent safeguards to ensure consent, compensation, and credit for the use of copyrighted works and intellectual property (IP), and appropriate transparency of training sets, AI will be used as a sophisticated, deceptive tool for content theft. We advocate for policies that:

- **Maintain strong copyright and IP laws, and prioritize the people involved in the creative process**
- **Require transparency of generative AI training data sets and the use of AI & ML systems**
- **Ensure entertainment workers are fairly compensated when their work is used to train, develop, or generate new works by AI systems**



## **Increase federal funding for the arts**

As the union behind entertainment, we know that funding for the arts directly impacts job growth and work for our skilled craftspeople. Federal arts agencies – like the National Endowment for the Arts – support working families, bolster local economies, and ensure all Americans have access to the arts and entertainment.

- **Support a funding level for the NEA equivalent to \$1 per capita (~\$336 million)**

## **Advance equity, diversity, and inclusion in the arts and entertainment industry**

Equal rights are the cornerstone of the labor movement. IATSE is committed to equality of opportunity, eliminating all forms of discrimination, and upending systemic racism in the arts and entertainment industry.

- **Pursue smart policy solutions aimed at creating diverse talent pipelines, incentivizing diversity in hiring, and supporting collective bargaining, outlined in [A Policy Agenda for Advancing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion \(EDI\) in the Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries](#)**
- **Pass the Equality Act ([H.R. 15](#) / [S. 5](#)) to prohibit discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity**

## **Defend our pension funds and ensure retirement security after a lifetime of work**

We commend the 117th Congress for passing the Butch Lewis Act to safeguard the long-term health of the multiemployer pension system. We oppose any proposals that would weaken our financially stable, healthy pension plans and harm the IATSE's ability to provide promised retirement security to workers. We must also protect and restore Social Security.

## **Safeguard our hard-won health care benefits and realize a health care system that is affordable and accessible to all**

We must make quality health care a basic right in the United States. Our longstanding goal for achieving this is to move expeditiously toward a single-payer system, such as **Medicare for All** ([H.R. 3421](#) / [S. 1655](#)), that provides universal coverage without diminishing the hard-fought benefits union members have won for themselves and all working people.

## **Protect the right to vote and seek fair elections with access to the ballot box for all Americans**

The right to vote is fundamental for working people. It is how we express our voice as citizens and the ultimate defense against the power of wealth and privilege. Our freedom to vote is under threat, as many states have placed undue restrictions on access to the ballot box. Early and absentee voting options, which entertainment workers rely on due to the transient nature of our work, are being curtailed across the U.S. To preserve the will of the people, we need national standards that ensure every voice is heard and every vote gets counted.

## **Establish a national paid family and medical leave program**

The IATSE is comprised of a diverse membership with a variety of family care needs. While some of our members can access state-level paid family and medical leave benefits, or have secured these benefits at the bargaining table, many more IATSE workers do not qualify for state-provided paid leave programs due to the intermittent “gig” based nature of our work performed for multiple employers each year, potentially in more than one state. In crafting a national program, we urge Congress to accommodate the unique work patterns of behind-the-scenes entertainment workers to ensure we are not left out of this important care infrastructure.