

| SELECTED JUDICIAL OR LEGISLATIVE ACTION OR GOVERNMENTAL POLICY REGARDING WORKPLACE RIGHTS | DATE |
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| In <i>Commonwealth v. Pullis</i> , the United States Supreme Court rules that an 1805 strike for higher wages by Philadelphia journeymen cordwainers is a criminal conspiracy. Based on British law, this legal view of unions was a reaction against them controlling labor markets in order to set wages. | 1806 |
| Ten-Hour workday established for federal employees by President Van Buren. | 1840 |
| Massachusetts and Connecticut pass child labor laws prohibiting working more than 10-hours a day. | 1842 |
| Massachusetts Supreme Court rules in the case of <i>Commonwealth v. Hunt</i> that workers have the right to organize and strike. This was the first time that unions achieved some kind of legal status in the U.S., although the right to collective bargaining was not part of it. | 1842 |
| New Hampshire becomes first state to pass a law establishing a 10-hour work day. | 1847 |
| President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation frees all slaves in the southern states under rebellion during the Civil War. | 1863 |
| The United States Senate passes the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, outlawing slavery throughout the nation. | 1865 |
| The United States Senate passes the 14th Amendment to the Constitution passes, granting all citizens regardless of race the same citizenship, due process, and equal protection rights under the law. | 1868 |
| The United States Senate passes the 15th Amendment to the Constitution, prohibiting government from denying a right to vote based on "race, color, or previous condition of servitude." | 1870 |
| The great Railroad Strike led to the development of legal injunctions to limit labor activities. They were easier and more effective than conspiracy charges and trials. At least 4,300 injunctions were issued between 1880 and 1930. | 1877 |
| A portion of the Erdman Act, which would have made it a criminal offense for railroads to dismiss employees or discriminate against prospective employees based on their union activities, is declared invalid by the United States Supreme Court. | 1898 |
| The U.S. Industrial Commission declares trade unions good for democracy. | 1900 |
| The Supreme Court holds that a maximum hours law for bakery workers is unconstitutional under the due process clause of the 14th amendment. | 1905 |

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| Backed by the Women's Trade Union League, several investigations in to the conditions of women workers are conducted over 3 years, authorized by the Secretary of Commerce & Labor. The investigations yield 19 volumes of reports unveiling poor conditions, health, and wages of women workers. | 1907 |
| AFL backs a presidential candidate for the first time, William Jennings Bryan. | 1908 |
| The Erdman Act, passed in 1898 to provide arbitration of disputes between interstate railroad companies and railroad workers unions, is severely weakened when Section 10 is declared unconstitutional. This section had made it illegal for railroad employers to fire employees for union activity. | 1908 |
| The Supreme Court orders the AFL to cease its promotion of a boycott against the Bucks Stove and Range Company. | 1911 |
| Massachusetts enacts first minimum wage law in U.S. | 1912 |
| The Clayton Antitrust Act passes providing some protection for union activities and limiting the use of injunctions. Section 6 of the Act exempts labor unions and agricultural organizations, stating "That the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce" and permitting labor organizations to carry out their "legitimate objects." Boycotts, peaceful strikes, peaceful picketing, and collective bargaining are not regulated by this statute. Injunctions could be used to settle labor disputes only when property damage was threatened. | 1914 |
| The Keating-Owen Child Labor Act of 1916 also known as Wick's Bill, is enacted by the U.S. Congress. It addresses the evils of child labor by prohibiting the sale in interstate commerce of goods produced by factories that employed children under fourteen, mines that employed children younger than sixteen, and any facility where children under sixteen worked at night or more than eight hours daily. The basis for the action was the constitutional clause giving Congress the task of regulating interstate commerce. It was declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court two years later. | 1916 |
| Congress passes the Adamson Eight-Hour Act, limiting working hours of railroad workers and strengthening the position of all unions advocating shorter hours. The act was passed to avoid a nationwide strike by the independent railroad brotherhoods. When the railroads refused to follow the act and challenged its constitutionality in court, the brotherhoods began preparing another strike. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law the following year. | 1916 |
| Congress passes immigration laws excluding Asians, as well as anarchists and others considered subversive. | 1917 |
| The War Labor Administration sets up a "Woman in Industry Service" (WIS) to address problems connected with more rapid introduction of women into industry. WIS formulates standards for employment of women in war industries, including a 48 hour work week, equal pay, lunch breaks, and sanitation and safety standards. | 1918 |
| New York unions form the American Labor Party. | 1919 |

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| <p>The Washington State Legislature passes a "Criminal Syndicalism" law banning anyone from, teaching, justifying, speaking, or publishing and distributing literature advocating "crime, sedition, violence, intimidation or injury as a means or way of effecting or resisting any industrial, economic, social, or political change." In the wake of World War I and the Russian Revolution, 23 states including California, Oregon, and Idaho also pass criminal syndicalism laws targeting the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and radical political parties. IWW members and radical activists are routinely jailed for speaking in public and distributing newspapers, effectively eliminating their freedom of speech.</p> | <p>1919</p> |
| <p>Union leader and socialist Eugene V. Debs runs for US President from prison as "Prisoner 9653" and wins over 900,000 votes.</p> | <p>1920</p> |
| <p>Alice Paul of the National Woman's Party introduces the first proposed amendment to the Constitution on equality for women. The Equal Rights Amendment does not gain enough support to pass.</p> | <p>1923</p> |
| <p>The Federal Government Classification Act passes. This was an equal pay victory for the Women's Bureau, which exposed hiring and wage discrimination against women in a 1920 report, "Women in the Federal Government." The new law establishes that Government salaries should be determined by job duties and not the sex of employee.</p> | <p>1923</p> |
| <p>A child labor amendment to the U.S. Constitution is proposed; only 28 of the necessary 36 states ratify it.</p> | <p>1924</p> |
| <p>The Railway Labor Act is passed by Congress. The act sets up a system of compulsory arbitration and presidential intervention that makes legal strikes nearly impossible. Twenty rail unions in the AFL lobbied for the act.</p> | <p>1926</p> |
| <p>Italian immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti are executed. They were anarchist militants who had been involved in labor strikes, political agitation, and antiwar propaganda. Their trial on murder and robbery charges drew massive public attention. Public agitation on their behalf by radicals, workers, immigrants, and Italians was international in scope. Demonstrations in the world's great cities--Paris, London, Mexico City, Buenos Aires--protested the unfairness of their trial. The certainty of their guilt remains questionable.</p> | <p>1927</p> |
| <p>Davis-Bacon Act provides for payment of locally prevailing wage rates on public construction projects.</p> | <p>1931</p> |
| <p>Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act bans "yellow dog contracts" which require employees to sign pledges not to join unions. Seattle School District "yellow dog contract" for teachers are voided.</p> | <p>1932</p> |
| <p>Section 213 of the Federal Economy Act requires that one spouse resign if both husband and wife are working for the Federal Government. A Women's Bureau study later shows that more than 75 % of those resigning are women. Section 213 remained on the books until 1937.</p> | <p>1932</p> |
| <p>Frances Perkins is appointed Secretary of Labor by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, making her the first woman member of a presidential cabinet.</p> | <p>1933</p> |

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| The National Industrial Recovery Act is passed, granting the right to organize and bargain collectively. However, it is declared unconstitutional in 1935 by which time it has been replaced by the National Labor Relations Act. | 1933 |
| The National Labor Relations Act (Wagner Act) is passed. After more than 100 years of struggle, most workers in the private sector in the U.S. are granted legal protection of "the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection." The act establishes the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to conduct elections for union representation and to investigate and remedy unfair labor practices. | 1935 |
| Social Security Act signed into law by FDR. | 1935 |
| The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is passed, providing a minimum wage, time and a half for overtime, and outlawing child labor. | 1938 |
| The federal minimum wage for workers employed in interstate commerce is set at 25¢ per hour, increasing to 40¢ after seven years. Minimum age for general employment set at 16. | 1938 |
| Alien Registration Act (Smith Act) signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. While the act was used against Nazi and Fascist sympathizers, federal authorities also used it against Minneapolis Teamsters who were allied with the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in 1941 and against ILWU president Harry Bridges. Authorities attempted to deport Bridges to Australia, alleging that he was a member of the Communist Party. This attempt to deport Bridges was overturned on appeal in 1945. | 1940 |
| The National War Labor Board is created with the participation and acceptance of union workers. | 1941 |
| The National War Labor Board issues an order "permitting" employers to equalize wages paid to women and men for work of comparable quality and quantity; the Federal government lowers the legal working age for women from 18 to 16. | 1942 |
| The Bracero Program brings in over 5 million workers from Mexico, mostly to remedy the agricultural labor shortage during WWII. | 1943 |
| Anti-labor War Labor Disputes Act (Smith-Connolly) becomes federal law. The act allows the federal government to take control of striking industries that would threaten war production. | 1943 |
| President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the Army to seize the executive offices of Montgomery Ward and Company after the corporation failed to comply with a National War Labor Board directive regarding union shops. | 1944 |
| The Women's Bureau and the WTUL wage an aggressive campaign for the House-sponsored Women's Equal Pay Act. | 1945 |

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| <p>The CIO adopts a new program at its convention, calling for heavier taxes on corporations and the rich, the Wagner Act extended to more workers, and self-determination for colonies.</p> | <p>1946</p> |
| <p>The Taft-Hartley Act (Labor-Management Relations Act), passed over a presidential veto by Harry Truman, amended the Wagner Act to limit collective bargaining rights for many workers and allowed states to become “right to work.” In 2011, 22 states in the U.S. have passed “right-to-work” legislation. Taft-Hartley outlawed mass picketing, sympathy strikes, and secondary boycotts, banned strikes by federal employees, provided the legal means by which unions could be voted out of a workplace, and required all union officers above the level of shop steward to sign non-communist affidavits.</p> | <p>1947</p> |
| <p>Washington State Law Against Employment Discrimination is passed. It states that, "The opportunity to obtain employment without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or declared national origin is hereby recognized as and declared to be a civil right." The law is later amended to cover sex, marital status, age (40+), disability, retaliation, sexual orientation/gender identity, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.</p> | <p>1949</p> |
| <p>The Fair Labor Standards Act is amended allowing minors 16 years of age and over to be employed in any occupation that has not been judged hazardous by the Secretary of Labor. Minimum age for work in industries classified as hazardous is 18.</p> | <p>1949</p> |
| <p>President Truman orders the U.S. Army to seize all the nation's railroads to prevent a general strike. The railroads are not returned to their owners until two years later.</p> | <p>1950</p> |
| <p>U.N. Refugee Convention is signed, defining rights for refugees, including protections for employment and welfare.</p> | <p>1951</p> |
| <p>President Truman ordered the U.S. Army to seize the nation's steel mills to avert a strike. The act is ruled to be illegal by the Supreme Court on June 2nd.</p> | <p>1952</p> |
| <p>"Operation Wetback" targets Mexican-American communities in search of illegal immigrants, deporting over 3.8 million members of working families back to Mexico.</p> | <p>1954</p> |
| <p>The Washington State Federation of Labor and the Washington State CIO Council work together to defeat right-to-work measures: Initiative 198 in 1956 and Initiative 202 in 1958. These two labor bodies had been bitter rivals in the 1930's but came together to fight the right-to-work threat and merged as the Washington State Labor Council in 1957. They also create the United Labor Lobby (ULL) which was able to win an extension of the 40 hour maximum work week to all Washington workers and an expansion of the unemployment insurance system in 1959.</p> | <p>1956</p> |
| <p>McClellan Committee Hearings. Teamsters President James Hoffa was investigated for corruption as part of these hearings.</p> | <p>1957</p> |

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| <p>The Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure (Landrum-Griffin) Act is passed requiring unions to hold secret elections for local union offices on a regular basis and allows for review by the United States Department of Labor of claims of improper election activity. This came in the wake of investigations into corruption in a number of large unions including the Teamsters and Mine Workers. The act prohibits individuals convicted of certain crimes from holding union office or serving unions in other "prohibited capacities." Organized labor opposed the act because it strengthened the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947.</p> | 1959 |
| <p>The Wisconsin Collective Bargaining Act is the first state-based law in the U.S. to provide some collective bargaining rights for public employees. This began movements throughout the U.S. to pass legislation granting these rights to state, county, city, educational, and governmental agency employees that continues to the present.</p> | 1959 |
| <p>The concept of "at-will" employment, a doctrine of American law that defines an employment relationship in which either party can break the relationship with no liability, provided there was no express employment contract and that the employer does not belong to a collective bargaining group (i.e., has not recognized a union), and which has its genesis in a rule in Horace Gray Wood's 1877 treatise on master-servant relations, is adopted by all U.S. states. At-will employment becomes the standard against which exceptions (like anti-discrimination laws) are tested.</p> | 1959 |
| <p>Executive order 10988 signed, giving federal employees the right to bargain collectively over some issues with government agencies.</p> | 1962 |
| <p>The Commission on the Status of Women report leads to the passage of the Equal Pay Act. The Equal Pay Act, signed by John F. Kennedy, made it illegal to pay different wages to men and women who performed the same work.</p> | 1963 |
| <p>Congress passes Civil Rights Act, including Title VII, which prohibits firms with 14 or more employees from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It establishes the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission to implement the law.</p> | 1964 |
| <p>Increased State Labor Council legislative activity wins limited collective bargaining rights for public employees in Washington State.</p> | 1967 |
| <p>The U.S. Age Discrimination in Employment Act is passed barring discrimination against workers ages 45-65.</p> | 1967 |
| <p>The Supreme Court hears <i>Bowe v. Colgate-Palmolive</i> and rules that any woman who meets the physical requirements can work in jobs that were once male-only.</p> | 1968 |
| <p>Congress passes the Occupational Safety and Health Act and establishes Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Supported by a coalition of unions and environmental organizations, OSHA guarantees workers the right to workplace safety and limits workers' exposure to industrial hazards, including poisonous chemicals. The law gave workers and unions the right to demand government inspection and remediation of unsafe working conditions.</p> | 1970 |
| <p>Department of Labor rules require government contractors to take positive action on discrimination against women. Such rules and acts are seen as the beginning of affirmative action laws.</p> | 1971 |

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| The Joint Resolution of the U.S. House & Senate that becomes the Equal Rights Amendment (E.R.A) is adopted and presented to the states for ratification. | 1972 |
| The Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act is passed in the State of Oregon, granting public employees the legal right to organize and bargain. | 1973 |
| The Comprehensive Employment & Training Act (CETA) passes to help prepare economically disadvantaged persons and those facing barriers to employment become productive members of the labor force. | 1973 |
| Fair Labor Standards Act extended to cover domestic workers, giving them minimum wage and overtime protections which are rarely enforced. | 1974 |
| Court rules that Northwest Airlines must pay female flight attendants the same scale as males. | 1974 |
| Department of Labor's affirmative action guidelines, 77-78, expand opportunities for women in apprenticeships and construction work. A goal of hiring women into 6.9% of federal funded construction projects is set, but never met. | 1978 |
| The Women's Bureau director testifies for an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, banning discrimination in employment based on pregnancy. | 1979 |
| The ANA plays a major role in getting an amendment passed prohibiting hospitals from using Medicare funds for anti-union activities. | 1980 |
| The Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. constitution is defeated when only 35 states pass the measure, three short of the 38 required for ratification. | 1982 |
| The Job Training Partnership Act replaces CETA as the primary federally-funded job training program to help disadvantaged or dislocated workers find permanent jobs. | 1983 |
| The Retirement Equity Act of 1984 makes it easier for women workers and surviving spouses of workers to collect retirement benefits under private pension plans. | 1984 |
| The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act reauthorizes Federal funding for vocational education, targeting over half the funds allocated to States for programs for special needs groups, primarily women. | 1984 |
| AFSCME wins a \$106.5 million settlement in its Comparable Worth sex discrimination suit on behalf of female employees of Washington State agencies. | 1986 |
| The Immigration Reform and Control Act gives amnesty to approximately 3 million undocumented residents and makes it illegal to employ undocumented workers. | 1986 |
| 1,700 female flight attendants win an 18-year lawsuit (which included \$37 million in damages) against United Airlines, which had fired them for getting married. | 1986 |

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| The Tax Reform Act of 1986 removes many working poor from tax rolls and gives higher standard deduction to single heads of household. This benefits many poor women and women who are single parents. | 1986 |
| In a comparable worth campaign, AFSCME Iowa Council 61 scores a \$1.3 million win for AFSCME state employees victimized by sex-based pay discrimination. | 1988 |
| The Women's Business Ownership Act amends the Equal Credit Opportunity Act to add particular business loans to those already covered and funds demonstration projects to provide training and management assistance to women in business or entering business. | 1988 |
| The Americans with Disabilities Act provides protections from discrimination in employment and public accommodations similar to those provided on the basis of race, sex, religion, and national origin by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. | 1990 |
| The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is signed by President Clinton. The FMLA mandates 12 weeks of unpaid leave for workers caring for family members without fear of losing their jobs. | 1993 |
| North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) comes into effect. | 1994 |
| AFL-CIO defeats legislation giving the president the ability to "Fast Track" trade legislation without assured protection of workers' rights and the environment | 1997 |
| Initiative 688 is approved by Washington voters requiring that a cost-of-living adjustment be made for the state minimum wage based on the federal Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W). This initiative was followed by a number of other states. Currently ten states (Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Vermont, and Washington) have minimum wages that are linked to a consumer price index. | 1998 |
| The Washington State legislature passes laws granting collective bargaining rights to state employees, faculty members at four-year state institutions of higher education, and teaching and research assistants at the University of Washington. Prior to 2002 state employees could bargain only over non-economic issues. Bills had been introduced each year since 1989 seeking these rights for state employees, but had failed in one or the other houses of the legislature. | 2002 |
| The ANA supports legislative action to address concerns about the Bush Administration's newly implemented overtime regulations. A new Department of Labor rule revised the Fair Labor Standards Act making it easier for employers to unfairly classify nurses and other workers as ineligible for overtime pay. | 2005 |
| The Washington State legislature passes a law granting in-home child care workers the right to collective bargaining so they can negotiate over state reimbursement rates and other economic issues and working conditions. | 2006 |
| The Washington State legislature passes a law granting adult family home providers the right to collective bargaining so they can negotiate over state reimbursement rates and other economic issues and working conditions. | 2007 |

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| <p>The Employee Free Choice Act is introduced in Congress. Proposing measures that would make it easier for workers for form unions, EFCA is the first major piece of federal legislation supporting worker's right to organize since the NLRA of 1935.</p> | <p>2007</p> |
| <p>Washington State legislature passes the Domestic Violence Leave Law which allows victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking to take reasonable leave from work — paid or unpaid — to take care of legal or law enforcement needs and obtain health care. Family members of a victim may also take reasonable leave to help the victim obtain treatment or seek help.</p> | <p>2008</p> |
| <p>The Washington State Legislature passes a law granting academic student employees at Washington State University the right to collective bargaining.</p> | <p>2008</p> |
| <p>President Obama signs into law the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act which amends the Civil Rights Act of 1964, giving victims of wage discrimination a new 180-day period for filing an equal-pay lawsuit with each new discriminatory paycheck. He also establishes the White House Council on Women and Girls to ensure that American women and girls are treated fairly in all matters of public policy like equal pay, family leave, child care and others. He emphasizes that these are not just women's issues, they are family issues and economic issues.</p> | <p>2009</p> |
| <p>Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire signs in to law a wage theft provision cracking down on employers who underpay workers (many of them undocumented immigrants) and violate minimum wage and overtime rules. Washington's law provides the State's Department of Labor and Industries with new tools to combat wage theft, including imposing penalties on businesses that repeatedly violate wage laws and allows the Department to require wage bonds of businesses that habitually fail to pay wages owed to their workers.</p> | <p>2010</p> |
| <p>The National Labor Relations Board sides with the Boeing machinists union (IAM 751) in a ruling that threatens to force Boeing to return airplane production to unionized workplaces in Washington State. The union had charged that Boeing had used the threat of moving production right-to-work and anti-union states like South Carolina as a way to intimidate Washington-based machinist union members, and retaliation for union activity. Such retaliation is illegal under the Wagner Act.</p> | <p>2011</p> |