



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jeffrey D. Klein

## UNIONS & LEADERS FIGHT TRUMP'S ANTI-LABOR VISION

JEFFREY D. KLEIN February 10, 2017

| ISSUE: **LABOR, WORKERS' RIGHTS, WORKER PROTECTION**

*Unions and Independent Democratic Conference members stand together against national right-to-work legislation and release four-point protection plan for New York State workers*

New York, NY — Standing up against the anti-labor vision of Donald Trump, **Senator Marisol Alcantara, (D-Manhattan), Labor Chair of the New York State Senate and Senator Diane Savino, Former Labor Chair of the New York State Senate (D-SI/Brooklyn)**, joined by Senators **Jeff Klein (D-Bronx/Westchester), Jesse Hamilton (D-Brooklyn)** and **Jose Peralta (D-Queens)**, and New York City labor leaders called on federal representatives to block right-to-work legislation and announced a four-point Labor Protection Plan to combat anti-worker legislation being pushed at the national level.

Alarmingly, Republicans in Congress have introduced legislation that would expand right-to-work laws nationally. Such laws exist in 28 states and have resulted in lower wages for workers, reductions in employers providing workers with benefits like health insurance and decreases in manufacturing jobs. The IDC's protection proposal aims to prevent the expansion of right-to-work legislation in New York while calling on federal representatives to block its expansion nationally.

"As a longtime labor organizer and as a student of history, I am well aware of the importance of the labor movement in building the middle class in this country. It is past time that we

stopped talking about how to manage the decline of organized labor and started talking about how to revitalize it for the changing conditions of the 21st century. I will fight to ensure dignity and a living wage for all New York State workers, and will stand strongly against any attempts by the federal government to undermine unions,” **said Senator Alcantara.**

“Unions were born in New York City, and as a former union leader I will always defend the rights of the men and women in labor. Right-to-work legislation is bad policy that decimates unions by tearing apart collective bargaining and overall discouraging workers from benefitting from what unions offer. The truth is when you live in a pro-union state, you earn more, you receive better health insurance benefits and you live more comfortably in retirement. These are important worker dignities that we will always stand by and fight for in this state, and and we will attempt to thwart any interference by the federal government to take those important rights away,” **said Senator Savino.**

“The attacks on labor across this country through right-to-work laws has had a devastating effect on the lives of workers. Now, with Vice President Mike Pence, a staunch defender of these laws, in the White House we have seen a push to expand them nationally by Congress. We will not stand by idly. The IDC will oppose any law that attempts to disenfranchise labor unions in this state and I urge my colleagues at the national level to do the same,” **said Senator Klein.**

“The working class is clearly under attack in the country, and one of the weapons being utilized to combat organized labor is the right-to-work laws, a tsunami that has swept labor protections and rights in more than two dozen states nationwide. States that have passed some sort of right-to-work legislation experienced negative economic outcomes, losing manufacturing jobs in an already decreasing workforce. I, alongside my colleagues in the IDC, strongly oppose any attempts to implement any form of right-to-work laws in our State,

and we will work to ensure none of these failed policies become law in New York. We are not going to stay passive as elected officials and organizations work to undermine labor rights and protections,” **said Senator Peralta.**

"Having been a member of DC37 for twenty-eight years, I know first-hand the value of unions. Unions have been at the core of upholding workers' rights for generations. We need to build on that legacy of protecting worker safety, fighting for fair wages, and upholding the value of shared prosperity. We need to be sure we expand upon our past successes. I am proud to stand with unions and my colleagues to advance the labor movement and uphold values central to every community participating in the American dream,” **said Senator Hamilton.**

The Independent Democratic Conference's four point Labor Protection Plan includes opposing right-to-work legislation in New York, calling on federal representatives to block national right-to-work legislation, blocking state funds to organizations like the National Right to Work Foundation that promote the implementation of these laws and opposing a Constitutional Convention in 2019.

As a conference, the IDC is opposed to any legislation that will make New York the 29th right-to-work state and will block any attempt to accomplish that goal, while also blocking state funding to organizations that promote such legislation. In opposing a Constitutional Convention, the IDC will work with labor to educate voters of the potential consequences of such an event, including the influence of outside special interests to push anti-worker amendments as well as the cost to taxpayers.

New York has always been an important state within the labor movement in the United States. It was home to the earliest labor strike in history in 1768 and has been a leader in both early and more recent labor movements.

“Now, more than ever, it is critical that elected officials speak out in support of the right of working people to join together in unions to protect and advance their interests,” **said Stuart Appelbaum, President of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, UFCW.** “The IDC Labor Protection Plan provides a blueprint for New York leaders to ensure workers continue to have the right to organize.”

“The national Right to Work Bill is merely an attempt to weaken the sovereignty of New York by diminishing our State Constitutionally protected right to collectively bargain. In the process it will silence the voices of workers and labor unions, while giving irresponsible employers the opportunity to exploit their workforce. However, this is not just an attack on labor unions; this law represents an attack on the quality of life of all working families. Labor unions have long set standard the standards in regards to wages, benefits, retirement security, and occupational safety, and without these standards, workers regardless of whether or not they currently belong to a union, will see a real decline in what they are able to take home at the end of a working week. We applaud Senator Klein and his Conference for understanding the impact that Right to Work could have on New York families and taking steps to preserve the rights of working people,” **said John R. Durso, President of Local 338 RWDSU/UFCW.**

“We applaud Senator Klein and the IDC for standing with the labor movement to protect the rights of workers. It is imperative that working men and women throughout New York State continue to have the right to collectively bargain. The fact is, union members enjoy far better wages, benefits and conditions of employment than non union workers. Working with all of our partners, we will continue to have the largest and strongest state labor movement in the country, which helps raise the standard of living and quality of life for all working people,” **said Mario Cilento, President, New York State AFL-CIO.**

"These laws should actually be called 'Right-To-Work-For-Less' because they are intended to slash working Americans' wages, benefits and voice. This type of legislation allows workers to freeload and stop paying dues, even though their unions are required to keep representing and bargaining contracts for them. What we are seeing is an all-out attack by far-right politicians and billionaires on working people and our unions. Right-To-Work-For-Less laws are an attempt to decimate the size, strength and resources of America's unions, which are the most effective voice for working people. We must defeat these anti-worker laws on the state and national level, and build a powerful workers' movement for a fair economy with good middle-class jobs, living wages, strong benefits and union rights for all," **said George Gresham, President, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers East.**

"We will continue to fight alongside our partners in the IDC until we have stopped the dangerous national effort to destroy our unions," **said Peter Ward, President of the New York Hotel and Motel Trades Council.** "We strongly endorse the Labor Protection Plan, which calls for the prevention of a national right-to-work law, opposes right-to-work legislation in New York State, stops state dollars from going to organizations that promote right-to-work laws, and opposes calling a constitutional convention. We will work tirelessly with the IDC on every piece of the Labor Protection Plan, and to ensure that all working New Yorkers retain their precious, hard-fought rights."

"For decades, laws governing the rights of unions to organize have given support to working families and communities across the nation. The New York State Nurses Association is fundamentally in support of these rights as they have given our 40,000 members a voice to advocate for patients and their families regarding their healthcare needs. We stand with other unions, community organizations and elected officials in opposition to any efforts, federally or state, that would in any way compromise these essential rights," **said Jill Furillo, RN, Executive Director, NYSNA.**

“This country’s labor unions are one of the last, great defenders of working people and the middle class. Our collective voice and collective action are a vital safeguard for ordinary Americans. We are proud to be standing together with members of the IDC to fight a national effort to silence working men and women,” **said Michael Mulgrew, President, United Federation of Teachers.**

“Unions are providing New Yorkers with good paying jobs and middle class opportunities,” stated Gary LaBarbera, president of the 100,000 member Building & Construction Trades Council of Greater New York. “It’s a disgrace that some are trying to bring failed right to work policies to our great, progressive state and want to undermine the chance to achieve the American Dream. Everyone has the right to choose to join or not join a union and efforts such as the IDC’s Labor Protection plan are essential to preserving the individual and societal benefits derived from union representation,” **said Gary LaBarbera, President, Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York.**

“For the past 50 years, New York state has operated under the Taylor Law, and we’ve enjoyed almost uninterrupted labor peace during that time. Simply said, if it’s not broken, why fix it?” **said New York State Troopers PBA President Thomas H. Mungeer.**

“The rights of workers in this nation to coalesce and unionize has been a cornerstone of our democracy and our economy for decades. Our great state was built on the backs of union workers and to change that because of a trending sentiment would cut at the very heart of what has progressed us to this point,” **said Patrick Cullen, President, New York State Supreme Court Officers.**

“The Subway Surface Supervisors Association is proud to stand with our brother and sisters in labor across the State of New York in support of the IDC's Labor Protection Plan. As the pendulum swings in Washington towards an increasingly anti-labor administration, it is crystal clear that labor needs to support those elected officials who support us, now more

than ever. We pledge our full support to IDC Leader Jeff Klein and his entire conference and will do everything possible to make sure that right to work legislation in New York is dead on arrival,” **said Michael Carrube, President, Subway Surface Supervisors Association.**

“Unions are vital to our workforce because they create jobs with higher wages and better benefits. Right-to-work legislation deprives workers of these vital protections that we've fought so hard for and the Elevator Constructors applaud the members of the Independent Democratic Conference for fighting against this bad proposed national policy and protecting labor on a state level,” **said Lenny Legotte, Business Manager, International Union of Elevator Constructors Local One.**