

## H.R. 1461

### The Veterans, Employees, and Taxpayers (VET) Protection Act of 2017

#### Main Messages

- Official time is not union time. It is used by employees and managers to come together to build a safer, just, more efficient workplace.
- Official time is never used to conduct union business, recruit new members, or engage in political activity.
- Official time is only used to represent government workers, amicably resolve disputes between managers and their employees, work with management to ensure compliance with health and safety rules, other patient safety requirements and implement new directives, and provide lawmakers with critical, on-the-ground information that improves federal agencies and protects America's heroes.
- This bill does nothing to improve the care of veterans. It silences workers, denies employees the ability to choose their own representatives, and tries to make it impossible for the union to represent VA workers – one-third of whom are veterans.
- This bill is simply a step too far.

#### Details about the Bill:

- The bill is sponsored by Rep. Jodey Arrington (Texas-19)
- The bill attempts to deprive federal employees of union representation in two main ways:
  - It severely restricts official time by imposing limits on **who** can serve as a union shop steward or officer, **how much** time they are permitted to spend on these official duties, and **what** they are permitted to do.
  - It attempts to deprive the union of resources and stability by inviting employees to drop union membership at any time.
- The bill takes away the right of agency leaders and employee representatives to determine the appropriate usage of official time by setting artificial caps: it caps the use of official time at 25% and ZERO official time for doctors, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, chiropractors, registered nurses, physician assistants, expanded-function dental auxiliaries, probationary workers, and employees earning in excess of \$100,000.
- It extends the "at-will" probationary period when employees can be fired – for any reason or no reason – from 12 to 24 months.