

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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January 16, 2014

Mr. Osama Al Najafi
Speaker of the Parliament
Parliament of Iraq
Baghdad, Iraq

The Honorable Osama Al Najafi:

I am writing to you on behalf of the 12.5 million working women and men of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO). For years, the AFL-CIO along with the international trade union movement has urged successive Iraqi governments to replace the 1987 Iraqi labor law because it places substantial restrictions on the fundamental rights of workers.

The AFL-CIO is deeply disappointed to learn that the legislation now before parliament contains several provisions that violate international standards, as well as important omissions despite considerable technical assistance from the International Labor Organization as well as input from the Iraqi trade unions and ITUC on various drafts of the labor law. The AFL-CIO urges you to suspend voting until the draft is brought into compliance with ILO conventions.

In particular, Iraqi trade unions are concerned by the ambiguous and indeed harmful provisions of the law before Parliament relating to collective bargaining, collective agreements, and dispute settlement issues, which fall squarely under ILO Convention 98, ratified by Iraq in 1962. The proposed law also fails to provide adequate protections for migrant workers and in particular domestic workers. The Iraqi unions have also identified other concerns including paid leave and overtime.

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The Parliament has an historic opportunity to ensure that workers and trade unions in Iraq are finally able to exercise their rights. The AFL-CIO strongly urges the Parliament to move forward based on the input from the trade unions and the ILO and to ensure that any new legal framework affords workers their rights under international law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cathy Feingold". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail.

Cathy Feingold
Director, International Department