

House Republicans Pass the 'Outsourcers Bill of Rights'

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Since President Obama introduced the American Jobs Act last week, one of the central political questions in Washington has been whether Republicans in the House of Representatives will actually undertake initiatives that could add jobs to the fragile economy. Yesterday, they took a step in the opposite direction.

By a vote of 238-136, the House **passed** the “Protecting Jobs from Government Interference Act,” which **prohibits** the National Labor Relations Board from ordering any employer to relocate, shut down, or transfer a business under any circumstance. Republicans claim to be motivated to act by an NLRB case against Boeing for opening a \$750 million assembly plant in South Carolina, which the agency wants moved to Washington state.

The NLRB believes Boeing is retaliating against workers in Washington, where there have been five strikes at Boeing plants since 1977. Boeing says it wants to build a plant in South Carolina because of low production costs, but the NLRB cites statements from company executives that unhappiness over union job actions in Washington spurred the move—and the National Labor Relations Act prohibits companies from retaliating against workers for exercising union rights. This is the rule Republicans want to strip away with their bill.

If passed by the Senate, many union officials—who have dubbed the bill the “Outsourcers Bill of Rights”—believe it will then become much easier for companies to outsource American jobs to other countries, since unionized workers will be left without any recourse.

Republicans have held the NLRB action up as evidence that the Obama administration is killing jobs—the sponsor of the bill is from a South Carolina district that would benefit from the Boeing plant. They, too, raise

fears of outsourcing, and argue that Boeing might send those jobs overseas because of the NLRB action. At a [news conference](#) on Capitol Hill earlier this week, Senator Rand Paul had a message for Obama:

“If you are in favor of jobs, you’ve got to be in favor of corporations. Quit going around the country and criticizing American corporations. Boeing could take these jobs overseas. Would you rather see these jobs go overseas?” Paul said.

But of course, the very provision of the National Labor Relations Act that the Republican bill eliminates *prevents* Boeing or other companies from taking those unionized jobs overseas. As over 250 university professors noted in a [letter](#) criticizing the legislation, the NLRB used this power to bring actions against a California jewelry company that announced it would move operations to Mexico shortly after its 118 workers voted to unionize. They kept their plant in California after the action was ruled retaliatory and illegal.

Earlier this summer, Representative George Miller [blasted](#) the bill as one that would “severely undermine the opportunity for middle class workers to succeed in life.” If unionized workers lose a remedy to outsourcing, there would be “a new race to the bottom for American workers. Workers will exercise their rights less frequently, and wages, benefits, and working conditions will get worse,” he said.

The Republican bill faces a very uncertain fate in the Senate, where Democrats hold a majority and majority leader Harry Reid has not even announced any plans to even bring it to a vote.