

# HB 24-1260 - THE WORKER FREEDOM ACT

— Majority Leader Monica Duran - Representative Tim Hernández - Senator Jessie Danielson —

## The Problem:

Colorado employers can require employees to attend meetings where they are forced to listen to the employer's political or religious beliefs. When attending these meetings, workers understandably fear that their jobs are at risk if they don't adopt the employer's viewpoint. These meetings are used by employers to inappropriately convey their positions on issues that are completely unrelated to job tasks or performance.

Employers intimidate and coerce workers to attend these meetings with threats of retaliation or discipline, site closures, wage and job cuts, and more. These meetings, also called "captive audience" meetings, affect workers from all political parties, backgrounds, and industries.

Bad actor employers use mandatory captive audience meetings to voice support for or opposition to political candidates, issues, legislation and campaigns; promote religious practices or affiliations, and; discuss membership in a civic, community or labor organization. These meetings typically include only one-sided information, with no ability to ask questions or hear alternate viewpoints.

No worker should live in fear that they will lose their livelihood if they refuse to attend an employer-mandated meeting on religious or political matters.

## The Solution:

Colorado must protect worker freedom by passing legislation that still allows these meetings to happen but protects workers from discipline and retaliation for opting out. Several states have already passed similar laws including Connecticut, Maine, Minnesota, New York, and Oregon.

## What the bill does not do:

- Infringe on the free speech of employers. Under this bill, employers are still able to express their beliefs freely and discuss political or religious views.
- Allow workers to opt out of meetings related to their job duties or any other meeting or training required by law, including sexual harassment and DEI.
- Enable frivolous lawsuits against an employer. Legal action can only be taken if an employee is disciplined, fired, or threatened for refusing to attend a captive audience meeting.
- Limit religious institutions' ability to discuss religion with their employees as they are carved out of the bill.
- Limit schools and institutions of higher education from discussing religious or political matters when part of coursework.

## What the bill does:

- Protects the free speech of workers by allowing them to opt out of mandatory political or religious meetings without the fear of retaliation or financial harm.
- Requires posting of employees' rights related to this law in the workplace.
- Holds employers accountable by allowing aggrieved individuals to bring claims in district court.
- If an employer is found to have violated the law, penalties may include reinstatement of the employee to their job, fines or actual damages, court costs, and attorney fees.

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