



Protect Local Democracy!

Legislation was recently introduced (SB634 & AB748) in the Wisconsin State Legislature that would prohibit (or “preempt”) local governments from creating or enforcing labor protections. The bill claims it wants “standardization” (title is “Employment Law Standardization Act,”) but in fact it seeks to **lower standards, choke democracy and stifle the voices** of community residents and their elected officials. The state government already prohibits local communities from passing living wage or paid sick days ordinances. Here’s what else the legislation would make sure local governments **can no longer do**:

1. **Raise pay for employees paid by taxpayer dollars:** Bill would prohibit a higher minimum wage for employees who perform contract work for a local government, or private sector employees who perform work that is funded by a local government.
2. **Limit discrimination:** Local governments would be unable to enact any regulations providing protections from employment discrimination – including provisions that outlaw discrimination based on gender identity.
3. **Stop wage theft:** Local governments couldn’t add rights or remedies to recover wages that an employee believes she or he is owed by her employer.
4. **Ensure fair scheduling:** The bill would ban any local regulations of employee hours, including any requirements of advance notice regarding schedules.
5. **Fight pay inequity:** Local governments couldn’t restrict an employer’s right to solicit information regarding the salary history of a prospective employee.
6. **Strengthen licensing requirements;** Local governments couldn’t enact any occupational licensing requirements more stringent than the state licensing requirements for that particular occupation.
7. **Promote labor peace:** The bill would prohibit “labor peace agreements,” under which workers who choose to form a union agree not to protest, strike or otherwise disrupt business, while employers agree not to pressure workers not to unionize. Many localities across the country have used such agreements to protect the right to unionize at publicly funded or subsidized projects such as airports.

These bills are part of a national conservative trend to attack local democracy. They go hand-in-hand with efforts to limit who can vote. And in some cases, they would set a criminal penalty for local action– for example, if a municipality passes an ordinance requiring a labor peace agreement.

The Keep Families First coalition is a statewide coalition of over 65 organizations in the state of Wisconsin.