



**INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD
OF ELECTRICAL
WORKERS®**

900 Seventh Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
202.833.7000
www.ibew.org

LONNIE R. STEPHENSON
International President

KENNETH W. COOPER
International
Secretary-Treasurer

February 7, 2018

To: All Members of the United States Senate

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the approximately 775,000 active members and retirees of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I write to urge you to oppose S. 140, “a bill to amend the White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act of 2010,” which passed the House of Representatives on January 10, 2018. This legislation includes the Tribal Labor Sovereignty Act of 2017 (formerly S. 63), which will waive the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), stripping hundreds of thousands of workers of their voice in the workplace.

The NLRA, which provides workers the right to join unions and collectively bargain for better wages, hours and working conditions, is a cornerstone of workers’ rights in the United States. By excluding casinos, power plants, saw mills, construction companies, ski resorts, high-tech firms, hotels and mines on tribal land from the definition of an “employer” under the NLRA, such workers will be deprived of those protections. The IBEW has members in all of these affected industries. A commitment to upholding the rights of Americans – and the guarantee of laws that protect them – is among your solemn duties as a member of the Senate, whether or not those Americans are employed by tribal-owned and -operated commercial enterprises on Indian land.

The IBEW strongly opposes any effort to exempt on an across-the-board basis all tribal enterprises from the NLRA without regard to a specific review of all of the circumstances, as is currently provided by National Labor Relations Board standards.

The IBEW has every respect for tribal sovereignty, and the notion that Indian tribes possess certain rights as distinct communities. Sovereignty is not in question here. But as a labor organization committed to the principle of workers’ rights, we fail to see how removing those protections from up to 800,000 Americans will help vulnerable workers in historically challenged lands, which have benefited from local-hire rules, training and apprenticeships, health and retirement benefits and collective bargaining that are hallmarks of unions. Instead, this legislation is an attempt by the gaming industry and nonunion contractors to pay workers less and prevent them from having a voice at work.

S. 140 is no more than a thinly veiled attack on unions and collective bargaining and a ploy to open the door for the biggest rollback of labor protections since the NLRA was enacted. I urgently and respectfully request that you vote “no” on S. 140.

Sincerely yours,

Lonnie R. Stephenson
International President

LRS:lgd