



What you can do:

- **Back the May Day March for Workplace Justice in London, or local events (see www.tuc.org.uk/mayday).**
- **Write to your MP, explain why you support the campaign and ask them to sign **Early Day Motion 1170**.**

Early Day Motion 1170

That this House recognises that free and independent trade unions are a force for good in UK society and around the world, and are vital to democracy; welcomes the positive role modern unions play in providing protection for working people and winning fairness at work; notes the 1906 Trades Disputes Act granted unions the legal freedom to take industrial action; regrets that successive anti-union legislation has meant that trade union rights are now weaker than those introduced by the Trades Disputes Act; notes the overwhelming support at both the Trades Union Congress and Labour Party Conference for the Gate Gourmet workers and for improvements in union rights, including measures to simplify ballot procedures and to allow limited supportive action, following a ballot, in specific circumstances; further notes that these conferences called for legislation which conformed to International Labour Organisation Conventions ratified by the UK; and therefore welcomes the decision of the 2005 Trades Union Congress to campaign for a Trade Union Freedom Bill to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1906 Trades Disputes Act.

Photos by John Harris, Jess Hurd and
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CAMPAIGNING FOR WORKPLACE JUSTICE



**Free unions!
Fair rights!**

THE CASE
FOR A
**TRADE UNION
FREEDOM BILL**
TO MODERNISE
UK LAW ON
INDUSTRIAL
ACTION



In 1906 unions won the legal right to organise industrial action, but successive anti-union restrictions mean that union rights are weaker than those introduced 100 years ago.

We need changes in the law to protect workers properly when they take official industrial action; cut red tape for unions; and allow supportive action against companies indirectly involved in a dispute.

Better protection for workers

All workers should have the right to strike or take official industrial action free from the fear of dismissal or victimisation.

Employers shouldn't be allowed to sack or penalise staff for taking action before, during or after a dispute.

Employers should be banned from taking unfair deductions from workers' pay packets for taking part in official industrial action. Workers should have the right to pay for the work they do.

Workers should be able to enforce these rights easily and effectively. The courts should be able to order employers to stop penalising staff before a full hearing, and order that sacked workers should get their jobs back.

Employers should be stopped from hiring agency workers to

carry out the work normally done by staff taking official industrial action.

Cut red tape for unions

Bureaucratic rules about industrial action notices and ballots should be simplified.

Unions should have to give an employer only seven days' notice of the proposed start of industrial



action. Unions should not have to give notice of a ballot.

Unions should be free to ballot for action, even if there has been an unsuccessful prior call for industrial action.

An employer should be required to supply information needed by unions to comply with balloting and notice rules.

Employers should not be allowed to use legal loopholes to get injunctions stopping industrial action. Injunctions should not be granted for minor technical errors, when a clear majority of members have voted in favour of industrial action.

Balloting rules should be brought into line with how MPs are elected. Ballots should stand unless unions make a mistake that could have changed the ballot result.

Prison officers should be allowed to take industrial action.

Supportive action

The law on industrial action is years out of date. It does not recognise changes in the economy such as contracting out, modern business structures and the complex patterns of modern ownership.

Unions should be able to take industrial action:

- over the terms and conditions offered by a future employer



where jobs are being transferred to the new employer

- against associated employers of the employer involved in a primary dispute, which will help to ensure employers cannot use technical loopholes to prevent workers in the same workplace, with the same management structure and effectively the same employer from taking action in support of each other.

Where there is official action being taken in one workplace, supportive action against another employer should be allowed after a ballot:

- when work or production has been transferred to that employer during a dispute to break a strike; or
- where a union is taking defensive action in the first workplace and the other employer has contributed to the dispute, for example, by aggressively cutting costs.