

# Vermont Should Stop Employer-Mandated Captive Audience Meetings

## Employers in Vermont can & do require employees to attend anti-union meetings

### (Captive audience meetings)

Vermont healthcare employers have diverted health care dollars from patient care to engage in union busting, including requiring attendance at on the clock anti-union meetings, on anti-union campaigns.

## Nationally, employers fight their employees' desire to organize in almost all cases.

Earlier this year, Cornell University researcher Kate Bronfenbrenner [testified](#) to Congress about the inner workings of private sector management's anti-union campaigning. She found that 87 percent of the time, management mounts a campaign to try to defeat the union organizing drive. Those campaigns use similar tactics. Most (74% of anti-union campaigns) hire an anti-union management consultant. Many (45%) threaten to shut down the firm in response to unionization. Many (30%) threaten to cut wages in response to unionization. **The most frequently used tactic is the captive audience meeting, used in 85 percent of anti-union campaigns.** We've seen that in coverage of union busting at [Starbucks](#) and [Amazon](#).

**States are taking action.** This bill would protect workers' rights to have a free and open choice about forming a union. Because employers are mandating meetings here in Vermont, we must act to stop this practice as soon as possible. The Protect the Right to Organize Act, a federal [bill](#) designed to limit

union busting would prevent managers from requiring workers to attend such meetings.

States can play an important and more immediate role here. This year, the Connecticut state legislature passed a [bill](#) to prevent management from compelling workers to attend meetings about political or religious matters, with political matters including issues related to decisions to join "political, civic, community, fraternal, or labor organizations." Oregon has a similar [statute](#), passed in 2010.

## In Vermont, the following bills have provisions that prohibit mandatory captive audience meetings **H.219, H.298 & S.106**

**State action prohibiting management from compelling workers to attend captive audience meetings has survived legal challenges.** There are two legal arguments used against state action on this issue. One is that it violates employer first amendment rights, and the second is that state action is preempted by the National Labor Relations Act. These issues were addressed by AFL-CIO counsel Craig Becker in [testimony](#) on the CT bill. While it has not come before the Supreme Court, the Oregon legislation has survived legal challenges from [business](#) and the [Trump Administration](#).

