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TUC vows to fight for repeal as anti-strike bill becomes law

The TUC has vowed to fight the anti-strike bill “tooth and nail” as the legislation passed its final parliamentary stage.

The Tory government’s anti-strike minimum service levels bill passed its final stages in the House of Commons last week. Pending Royal Assent, the bill will pass into law later this year.

The impact of the bill on millions of workers is significant. Once it passes into law, it can be applied by government and employers to effectively force a minimum number of workers to attend work, even if there is a legal mandate for strike action in place.

Impact on PCS members

The bill will mean that when workers lawfully vote to strike in health, education, fire, transport, border security and nuclear decommissioning, they could be forced to attend work – and sacked if they don’t comply.

This might impact on any future strike action that PCS members vote to take in any of the broad areas detailed, particularly those working for parts of the Home Office and for the Border Force.

Research by the TUC found a massive 1 in 5 workers in Britain – or 5.5 million workers - are at risk of having their right to strike undermined. The legislation gives ministers sweeping powers to impose strike restrictions in any service within those extremely broad sectors.

Opposition to the bill

In addition to opposition by PCS and the whole trade union movement through the TUC, the bill is opposed by a range of other bodies and organisations, including [civil liberties organisations such as Liberty](#), the [Joint Committee on](#)

[Human Rights, House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, race](#) and [gender](#) equalities groups, [employment rights lawyers, politicians around the world](#) – as well as a whole host of other organisations.

The government has also come [under criticism for the bill from UN workers' rights organisation, the ILO](#), that has demanded that the UK government respect international law

Fight to repeal the bill

Having recently [suffered an humiliating defeat in the High Court](#) to their plans to change regulations to allow agency workers to break lawful strikes, the government is now taking the same reckless approach with the minimum service levels bill.

The likelihood that this bill will breach international law offers an opportunity to the trade union movement to inflict yet another humiliation on the Tory government.

TUC General Secretary, Paul Nowak, said: “Make no mistake. The TUC will fight this pernicious legislation tooth and nail – exploring all options including legal routes.”

“We won’t stand by and let workers get sacked for defending their pay and conditions. And we won’t rest until this bill has been repealed.”