

Senate Bill 469

By: Senators Balfour of the 9th, Hamrick of the 30th, Cowsert of the 46th and Tolleson of the 20th

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 6 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to labor  
2 organizations and labor relations, so as to provide that certain provisions prohibiting mass  
3 picketing shall apply to certain private residences; to provide for an action to enjoin unlawful  
4 mass picketing; to provide for punishment and penalties; to provide for injunctive relief; to  
5 provide for public policy concerning refusal or decision to withdraw from a labor union or  
6 employee organization; to provide for certain contract and agreement employment rights; to  
7 provide for the development by the Department of Labor of employee rights information; to  
8 provide certain posting requirements by private employers; to provide for enforcement; to  
9 provide for changes to agreements and contracts permitting labor organizations to deduct fees  
10 from employees' earnings; to amend Code Section 16-7-21, relating to criminal trespass, so  
11 as to provide for both criminal trespass and criminal conspiracy; to provide for punishment  
12 and fines; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

14 style="text-align:center">**SECTION 1.**

15 Chapter 6 of Title 34 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to labor  
16 organizations and labor relations, is amended by revising Code Section 34-6-5, relating to  
17 interference with public ways of travel, transportation, or conveyance by mass picketing near  
18 site of a labor dispute, as follows:

19 "34-6-5.

20 (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in mass picketing at or near any place,  
21 including private residences, where a labor dispute exists in such number or manner as to  
22 obstruct or interfere with or constitute a threat to obstruct or interfere with the entrance to  
23 or egress from any place of employment or the free and uninterrupted use of public roads,  
24 streets, highways, railroads, airports, or other ways of travel, transportation, or conveyance.

25 (b) A person, or organization that he or she is affiliated with or acting on behalf of,  
26 commits an offense when he or she engages in targeted picketing of a private residence that

27 has or intends the effect of interfering with the resident's right to quiet enjoyment, or when  
 28 such targeted picketing has or intends the effect of violence or intimidation. This  
 29 subsection shall not apply to private residences that are also places of employment when  
 30 targeted picketing relates to or is targeted at such employment.

31 (c) An employer or other person or entity that is the target of an activity prohibited under  
 32 subsection (a) of this Code section may bring an action to enjoin the prohibited activity  
 33 against an individual or organization affiliated with such individual in the circuit court for  
 34 the county in which the affected employer, person, or entity is located. A court having  
 35 jurisdiction of an action brought under this subsection shall grant injunctive relief if the  
 36 court finds that any person, union, or organization has engaged or is engaging in any of the  
 37 conduct prohibited under subsection (a) of this Code section, without regard to the  
 38 existence of other remedies, demonstration of irreparable harm, or other factors. The court  
 39 shall award court costs and reasonable attorney fees to a plaintiff who prevails in an action  
 40 brought under this subsection.

41 (d) Failure to comply with an order of the court issued under this Code section may be  
 42 punished as contempt.

43 (e) A person who violates subsection (a) of this Code section and has previously been  
 44 enjoined for a violation of subsection (a) of this Code section is subject to a civil fine of  
 45 \$1,000.00 for each day of the violation. If a union or organization continues to sponsor or  
 46 assist in the prohibited activity in violation of an injunction, the union or organization is  
 47 subject to a civil fine of \$10,000.00 for each day of the violation. The civil fine assessed  
 48 under this subsection shall be paid to the court, and, upon a showing of damages to  
 49 business sales, business opportunities, or property, the employer, person, or entity that was  
 50 the target of the activity prohibited under subsection (a) of this Code section shall be  
 51 compensated from the payment made to the court.

52 (f) An employer that is the target of picketing may obtain injunctive relief against picketers  
 53 without a showing of irreparable harm if the court finds the picketing to be in violation of  
 54 subsection (a) of this Code section."

55 **SECTION 2.**

56 Said chapter is further amended by adding a new Code section to read as follows:

57 "34-6-9.

58 (a) It is the public policy of the State of Georgia that:

59 (1) Employees in Georgia have the right to employment without regard to any person's  
 60 refusal to join or affiliate with, or decision to withdraw from or cease membership in, any  
 61 labor union or employee organization of any kind;

62 (2) Employees in Georgia have the right to be employed free from the restraints of any  
 63 contract, combination, or agreement, written or oral, that provides for exclusion from  
 64 employment of any person due to their refusal to join or affiliate with, or decision to  
 65 withdraw from or cease membership in, any labor union or employee organization of any  
 66 kind;

67 (3) Employees in Georgia have the right to be employed without regard to any person's  
 68 refusal to pay dues, fees, assessments, or other charges to any labor union or employee  
 69 organization of any kind; and

70 (4) Employees in Georgia have the right to decertify a union or other bargaining  
 71 representative upon compliance with the applicable provisions of federal law.

72 (b) The Department of Labor shall develop and display on its website a suitable form of  
 73 notice providing employees with information regarding their rights under this Code section.

74 (c) Private employers shall physically post adequate notice informing employees of the  
 75 rights described in this Code section at locations where notices are normally posted or, if  
 76 no such normal location for posting exists, physically disseminate such notice to  
 77 employees. A private employer may also, at its discretion, post such notices on the  
 78 company's intranet or disseminate them via other electronic means of communication.

79 (d) If compliance by an employer with subsection (c) of this Code section will create an  
 80 undue hardship posing significant difficulty or expense, then such employer is exempted  
 81 from compliance with subsection (c) of this Code section.

82 (e) The Commissioner of Labor shall be charged with enforcement of the obligations  
 83 contained in this Code section. In carrying out the commissioner's responsibility to ensure  
 84 compliance, the commissioner, or the person to whom the commissioner delegates such  
 85 responsibility, is authorized to:

86 (1) Receive complaints or reports of noncompliance from any person;

87 (2) Inspect and investigate any report of noncompliance; and

88 (3) Give notice of noncompliance to any employer who is in violation of this Code  
 89 section.

90 (f) The commissioner shall designate those persons in the commissioner's department  
 91 responsible for carrying out the commissioner's powers, duties, and responsibilities under  
 92 this Code section."

93 **SECTION 3.**

94 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 34-6-25, relating to deductions  
 95 from employees' earnings of fees of labor organizations, as follows:

96 "34-6-25.

97 No employer shall deduct from the wages or other earnings of any employee any fee,  
 98 assessment, or other sum of money whatsoever to be held for or to be paid over to a labor  
 99 organization except on the ~~individual order or request of the employee, which shall not be~~  
 100 ~~irrevocable for a period of more than one year~~ annual written authorization from the  
 101 employee which shall not exceed a period greater than one year. Such authorization may  
 102 be revoked at any time at the request of the employee."

103 **SECTION 4.**

104 Said chapter is further amended by revising Code Section 34-6-26, relating to contracts  
 105 allowing deductions from employees' earnings of fees of labor organizations, as follows:

106 "34-6-26.

107 It shall be unlawful for any employer to contract with any labor organization and for any  
 108 labor organization to contract with any employer for the deduction of any fee, assessment,  
 109 or other sum of money whatsoever from the wages or other earnings of an employee to be  
 110 held for or to be paid over to a labor organization except upon the condition to be embodied  
 111 in said contract that such deduction will be made only on the ~~individual order or request~~  
 112 ~~of the employee, which shall not be irrevocable for a period of more than one year~~ annual  
 113 written authorization. Such authorization may be revoked at any time at the request of the  
 114 employee."

115 **SECTION 5.**

116 Code Section 16-7-21 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to criminal  
 117 trespass, is amended by revising subsection (d) as follows:

118 "(d)(1) A person who commits the offense of criminal trespass shall be guilty of a  
 119 misdemeanor.

120 (2) The provisions of Code Section 16-4-8.1 notwithstanding, a person may be convicted  
 121 of both conspiracy to commit criminal trespass and the completed crime of criminal  
 122 trespass, in which event such separate crime of conspiracy shall be a felony punishable  
 123 by imprisonment for not more than one year, a fine of not more than \$10,000.00, or both  
 124 such fine and imprisonment."

125 **SECTION 6.**

126 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.