



August 12, 2026

House Passes Faster Labor Contracts Act, Sending It to the Senate

Sonderling Nomination Advances to the Senate Floor



PRO Act Provision Clears the House

Last month's update flagged the potential for pieces of the PRO Act moving on their own. That has now happened, despite Republicans' continued control of the House.

Here's what you need to know.

What moved

The Faster Labor Contracts Act replicates a provision of the PRO Act placing a hard clock on first-contract bargaining. Once workers at a company vote to unionize, the employer has 10 days to come to the table. No agreement after 90 days sends the dispute to federal mediation, and if that fails after another 30, a three-person arbitration panel sets the terms. Under current law neither side has to accept any specific proposal. Here an arbitrator can impose one.

Detached from the rest of the bill, it passed the House.

How it got through

The bill took an alternative route in which the sponsors filed a discharge petition, a tool that forces a floor vote once 218 members sign, bypassing committee jurisdiction, cost estimates, and the stakeholder input a labor bill would normally draw.

Twenty Republicans voted in support of a bill their party had kept off the floor. The full PRO Act has never come close to that level of crossover.

Why it matters

The PRO Act's most direct threat to owner-operators is the ABC test, which would presume employee status unless a company clears all three prongs. That language did not move here, and this bill does not change how anyone is classified.

The piecemeal method discussed last month is the point to notice. A provision that could not pass inside the larger bill passed once it was pulled out and voted on alone. The same logic applies to other pieces of the PRO Act, including the classification language. The risk of this happening was expected to wait for a change in control of Congress. This did not.

What comes next

The House bill heads to the Senate, where a companion measure, S. 844, has been pending for over a year. Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) leads it, joined by Republicans Bernie Moreno (OH) and Roger Marshall (KS) and Democrats Cory Booker (NJ), Gary Peters (MI), and Jeff Merkley (OR). It carries a Teamsters endorsement, and Hawley and Marshall both sit on the committee with jurisdiction.

The odds remain long, since most legislation needs 60 votes to break a filibuster, and the bill has drawn opposition from business organizations and conservative groups scoring it as a key vote. It has not moved since arriving.

Bottom line

One piece of the PRO Act is now further along than the PRO Act has ever been. It did it by traveling alone, skipping committee, and picking up votes from both parties.

TIE will continue to monitor the bill in the Senate and any effort to advance other PRO Act provisions separately.

Sonderling Clears Committee

The nomination TIE backed in July cleared committee at the end of the month. What remains is a floor vote, and the calendar is working against it.

Where it stands

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee approved Keith Sonderling's nomination as Secretary of Labor by a vote of 12 to 11 on July 30. Every Republican voted yes, every Democrat no.

His hearing two weeks earlier drew relatively little heat. Most of the questioning centered on the Department of Labor absorbing Education Department grant programs, not on classification or wage and hour policy. Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA), who chairs the committee, called him qualified. Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) framed a vote for him as a vote to undercut overtime protections and unions. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) said the department needs someone willing to stand up to corporate interests.

What's left

Only a simple majority on the Senate floor. Sonderling cleared that bar in March 2025 for the deputy job, 53 to 46, and a similar count would confirm him now.

Timing is the question. The Senate's August recess falls immediately after the committee vote, and it was not clear whether the floor would take up the nomination beforehand. Floor time for nominations competes with everything else the chamber has queued up.

Why it matters here

The Wage and Hour Division reports to whoever holds this job, and Wage and Hour writes the independent contractor rule. That rulemaking, which would restore the 2021 economic realities test and its two core factors of control and opportunity for profit or loss, closed its comment period in April and is still awaiting a final version.

Sonderling has run the department in an acting capacity since April and served in Wage and Hour during the first Trump administration. Confirmation would replace temporary authority with a Senate-backed mandate at the agency deciding how classification is applied, while the rule that matters most to the owner-operator model is still unfinished.

Bottom line

The nomination moved on schedule and along expected lines. Nothing about the committee vote suggests trouble on the floor, though a delayed confirmation leaves the department under acting leadership while the classification rulemaking waits.

TIE signed onto a Coalition for a Democratic Workplace letter urging quick confirmation and will report the outcome of the floor vote.

Truckers Integral to Our Economy is a 501©4 dedicated to the preservation of the independent contractor model in the trucking industry. For more information, contact Scott Brenner @ sbrenner@crshq.com or www.truckerchoice.org.