

To all University of Iowa graduate and professional student workers:

Today Terry Branstad signed into law House File 291. This needlessly rewrites Iowa's 43-year-old collective bargaining laws, even impacting our ongoing negotiations with the Board of Regents. These changes are a poorly disguised attempt to suppress our human rights as workers, including our democratic right to determine the conditions of our work.

Your benefits will remain unchanged through the term of our current contract, which expires on June 30, 2017. We urge you to see a doctor before our current contract expires.

In a separate FAQ on our website, we explain how Iowa's new law effects the bargaining process through which we secured your current benefits. Here we want to clarify how these changes effect the union itself.

The purpose of this law is to bust unions. Branstad and company are trying to bust unions by (1) making staying in a union harder for workers and (2) restricting the legal powers of unions. The new law forces unions to hold hard-to-win biannual elections that nobody asked for to retain their certification (their legal status as a union). And the new law severely restricts the scope of bargaining (the benefits we can put in our contract).

We want to be clear: their plan will fail. They have limited our legal power, making it harder for graduate workers to democratically determine the conditions of their work. But they did not, and cannot, bust our union with a few strokes of the pen in Des Moines.

Those pushing this law misunderstand what a union is. A union just *is* the workers. You cannot kill a union without killing all the workers. And we are still here. We are ready to continue the fight. Collectively we have tremendous power. We are not afraid to use it.

Graduate workers have been organizing and making our voices heard in the workplace, as it is our human right to do, for over 20 years. We were organizing before we won our union in 1996. And however bought liars in Des Moines may legislate, we will still organize.

The history of labor is filled with examples of the state being leveraged by corporations to keep workers down. Iowa's new law is another glaring example. But our workers' rights will not go away. Many before us have died for their human right to organize. Many graduate workers before us fought for the benefits we now have. We too will fight to keep them, for ourselves and for our posterity. We will not stop fighting together, not now and not ever.

In loving solidarity,  
the officers of Campaign to Organize Graduate Students, COGS

