

Actors' Equity Association is a labor union that exists primarily to advocate for better wages and working conditions for its artist members.

After dedicating months of staff time, conducting surveys and membership meetings—and considering the results of the advisory referendum, which prompted AEA's Council to carve out even more exemptions to its original proposals—the governing body created a system that would allow for some members to be paid minimum wage for rehearsals and performances, while those who chose to would still be able to volunteer their time to a) self-produce, b) perform with membership companies under the new internal membership rules, and c) appear in 50-seat showcases. Only non-member-driven producing organizations are subject to the new minimum wage requirements, which are certainly not a radical concept in any case.

It is disappointing that this prolonged process has now resulted in what will surely be a very expensive litigation for Equity. Unfortunately, the real victims here are the members all over the country who understand that when a single community files costly lawsuits and buys full page ads in major newspapers to insist that they should not be paid, it has an inevitable and deleterious effect on the union's bargaining power for the rest of its members.

Equity is fully prepared to defend both the process and the substance of Council's actions.

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