



# Amherst Massachusetts

Amherst Human Rights Commission

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## 2014 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

### ARTICLE 35 – RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

Workers' right to organize has been under attack in this country, despite protection under the National Labor Relations Act. Article 35 – Right to Organize, sponsored by the Human Rights Commission, is a resolution that calls on the Town of Amherst to encourage local employers to recognize the rights of workers to freely and openly pursue organizing a union of their choosing without negative repercussions. Similar resolutions have been passed in Northampton, Chicopee, Holyoke, Pittsfield and Springfield.

In the late 1990s, Amherst Town Meeting established – by both resolution and bylaw – its support for workers' rights and responsible employers. Amherst, all agree, is a town where employees should feel respected.

The main thrust of Town Meeting Article 35 directly asks employers to join in this support by respecting “that the question to unionize or not is for employees to decide” – that is, employers should “agree not to express an opinion either pro or con on the merits of unionization.”

Employer neutrality is essential in today's economy which has been undermined by a growing gap between the rich and the rest of us. This gap results from the decline in union membership and direct attacks on workers' ability to bargain collectively with employers.

In addition, just as the Town has historically supported the right to organize, Article 35, sponsored by the Human Rights Commission, seeks to acknowledge employers who do the same.

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