

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION TO THE LEGAL WORKER AMENDMENT

I was hoping to write in support of the proposed Legal Worker Amendment but unfortunately, that is not the case.

There's something that I want to make abundantly clear, I have never opposed changing the Legal Worker Amendment — I oppose what is being proposed.

At issue is what the amendment is supposed to mean based on the FAQs. The FAQs is not a binding contract that can be called upon if and when disagreements arise.

The Guild and especially the National Office has a way of changing the interpretation depending on who is in office and the politics of the people involved at the time. That is not who I would trust to be fair in determining how chapters are run at the local level.

At best the FAQs are a smoke screen or a red herring argument that is not based on any facts or research — they're propaganda.

What studies did the steering committee do to show that “changing the definition of a legal worker will bring in more people of color?” None. Definitely not Pew Research.

It's simply untrue.

Why would underrepresented groups join the NLG when it's known that this organization is rampant with racism? An issue that is systemic and continues to persist despite some valiant efforts to make the organization change.

There are also numerous organizations that are minority-led like the [Black Legal Observer Collective](#) in NYC which was created by and for Black people that do the same or similar work.

Again, why would diverse people join the Guild especially if they know how racist it can be? That doesn't make any sense.

Claims that say not changing this Legal Worker Amendment is racist are unfounded. What does racism have to do with expanding the definition of a legal worker? Still, why would people want more people of color in the organization when the ones that are already here are often mistreated?

Something else that doesn't make any sense.

We need to clean house first before we invite people into a culture that is already unhealthy.

What is the plan for people if they do join? No one has put forth any strategy of any sort to deal with any influx of people in a **volunteer organization**. Most chapters are not staffed and have limited resources.

This proposed Legal Worker Amendment is not well thought out and doesn't consider the impacts on both small and large chapters.

The proponents will say, "what did you do to help?" For over a year now, I urged NYC to offer up an alternative — a feat in and of itself. There was pushback and in some cases, people abstained from the process. I worked with my chapter in an effort to find some middle ground that we can all work with to no avail.

We actually incorporated the FAQs in our proposal. That's why we added the additional lines. Not to create a loophole but instead to allow small and large chapters to handle things accordingly. **There was never any attempt to exclude anyone — period.**

In fact, the person who suggested the changes was another woman of color in our chapter. Why would we want to make changes that would exclude us? Another argument that doesn't make any sense.

It turns out that the proponents don't want to work together. It has to be all or none. When we proposed our friendly amendment, we weren't even given a chance to defend or provide an explanation of what it meant or how it came to be. *How is that democratic?*

Kris Hermes provided his own interpretation to rile people up on the legal worker listserv. The gripe was that it doesn't protect people who want to speak up about racism in leadership.

I want to be clear, the proposed amendment doesn't either. In fact, there's no amendment that would protect a person of color from that.

I'll give you all an example: We all know about slavery, right? What happened when they freed the slaves? Jim Crow. Then what happened when Jim Crow didn't work? Systemic racism.

What laws in a society and a country where its foundations were built off the backs of slaves would make them equal in the eyes of the law? I'll wait.

So, given the history of America, how do you suppose that changing the definition of a legal worker would impact racism in the Guild? Short answer — it won't.

Another nonsensical argument by white people who don't understand racism. See the problem?

Voting "NO" to the Legal Worker Amendment doesn't mean you don't want it to change. You're voting "NO" to the process by which it changes and what it changes to. You're voting "NO" to unclear policies and practices that leave chapters in the dark. You're voting "NO" to nonsense, not legal workers.

Join me in telling the National Office "NO"!