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To: All Members - Home addresses

Dear Brother, Sister

Our democratic rights as workers are under attack
Register your vote in FBU ballot for action
Vote YES

The Westminster government has announced new attacks on the rights of workers to take industrial action. They have done this through publication of the Strikes (minimum service levels) Bill. The Bill targets workers in particular sectors of the economy, including the fire and rescue service. It is abundantly clear that the FBU is one of the key targets in this latest attack.

This proposed legislation is an attempt to weaken workers' rights and to undermine trade unions. The overwhelming reason for the proposals is the desire of the Conservative government to push down wages, particularly in the public sector. Just for daring to ballot for strike action over our falling living standards, firefighters have been threatened with more anti-union laws.

These attacks underline the need to **VOTE YES** for strike action in the FBU's pay ballot.

Leaked Westminster government emails reported in *The Observer* newspaper detailed proposals to ban any union membership for certain groups of workers, take away some workers' right to strike and impose more anti-union restrictions on members taking action. Firefighters were included in these discussions.

The emails, drawn up by officials and lawyers in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and shared last month with senior civil servants, presented three models for Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak to consider when formulating the government's anti-strike laws.

The first proposal, described as a "police service ban on striking" because police officers are banned from industrial action, advocated "staff banned from joining a trade union" with striking or "inciting disaffection" to become a criminal offence.

The second model, a "prison service-style ban on striking", would impose restrictions on prison officers who are also banned from industrial action.

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The third option – the one brought to the Westminster parliament on 10 January – is legislation to enforce “minimum service levels” in public services such as fire and the NHS, with employers able to sue unions and sack staff if minimum standards are not met.

The message is clear: the same ministers who want to cut our wages also want to destroy our right to take action to improve pay. FBU members need to stand up for our rights. That means **VOTE YES** in the ballot before 30 January.

You will be aware that postal services have been disrupted by strike action by members of the CWU. The FBU fully supports postal workers seeking to defend their own pay and conditions. We must also take account of the difficulties this may have created for our own ballot.

We therefore urge all members to:

1. Ensure you have voted in the ballot.
2. Please vote YES.
3. Ensure the ballot is posted as required.
4. Speak to all colleagues to ensure they have voted and posted their ballot.
5. Seek replacement ballot papers if appropriate.

We know the level of anger among FBU members at years of attacks on pay. The next step in fighting back is to ensure the maximum vote in our ballot - and the maximum YES vote.

Yours in unity

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Wrack'.

Matt Wrack
General Secretary

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