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Congressman Proposes National Right to Work Law

Pro-Forced Dues Federal Policy Harms Employees, Firms Nationwide

Last month, U.S. Rep. Steve King (R-Iowa) and 76 original cosponsors introduced legislation on Capitol Hill that would restore an important personal freedom for millions of American employees.

Rep. King's H.R.612, also known as the National Right to Work Act, would not add a single word to federal law. Instead, it would simply repeal the current provisions that authorize compulsory union dues and fee payments as a condition of employment.

And soon after this Newsletter edition goes to press, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) will introduce companion legislation for H.R.612 in Congress' upper chamber.

"When the King-Paul measure becomes law, private sector employees in all 50 states will have the freedom to choose as individuals whether or not to join or pay dues to a union," explained Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"No employees covered by federal labor statutes will face job loss as a consequence of their decision to refuse to join or bankroll a union.

"H.R.612 accomplishes this important policy change by removing all the forced union dues-imposing provisions now included in the National Labor Relations Act [NLRA] and the Railway Labor Act [RLA]."

Latest Census Data Show Americans Continue to Flock To Right to Work States

Compulsory unionism is primarily a moral issue. At the same time, of all the economic reforms Congress may consider this year and in 2016, H.R.612 would likely have the strongest positive impact for incomes and jobs.

To illustrate the point, Mr. Mix cited recently-released U.S. Census Bureau (BOC) data concerning the net domestic migration of residents of the 50 states from April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2014.

"According to the BOC," noted Mr. Mix, "over the course of this 51-month period, a net total of nearly 1.6 million people moved into states where the Right to Work was protected for the entire time in question from somewhere else in the U.S.

"The positive correlation between Right to Work and domestic migration is quite robust.

"Of the seven states with the greatest absolute net in-migration since April 2010, six have longstanding Right to Work laws. Meanwhile, 12 of the 13 states with the greatest absolute net out-migration are forced-unionism."

(Since Indiana and Michigan adopted their Right to Work laws only recently, they are excluded from the analysis. See the table on this page for more information.)

Families With Children Flee Forced Unionism

BOC statistics also show that a disproportionately large share of the net migration into Right to Work states as a group consists of working families with children aged 17 and under.

"From 2003 to 2013," noted Mr. Mix, "the aggregate '17 and under' population

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Biggest Losers and Gainers From Domestic Migration, April 2010 - July 2014

New York	-486,850	Texas	+562,661
Illinois	-318,987	Florida	+449,934
New Jersey	-204,197	North Carolina	+143,428
California	-189,282	Colorado	+140,116
Ohio	-122,031	Arizona	+116,355
Pennsylvania	-89,155	South Carolina	+112,384
Connecticut	-75,852	Tennessee	+84,343

Compulsory-Unionism States Right to Work States

Indiana and Michigan, which became Right to Work States in 2012 and 2013, respectively, are excluded. Figures denote net migration from other states between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2014. States listed are the biggest losers and gainers in absolute, not percentage, terms. Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau

CREDIT: POPULATION DIVISION, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Among the nine states suffering the greatest net out-migration of people into other states from April 1, 2010, through July 1, 2014, not one had a Right to Work law on the books as of 2011.

All States Would Reap Benefits

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of the 22 states that had Right to Work laws on the books for the whole decade grew by 7.1%. Meanwhile, the youth population of the 26 states that are still forced-unionism today fell by 3.0%.

"From July 1, 2013, to July 1, 2014, BOC data released at the end of last year show, the number of children in the 24 Right to Work states increased by 116,000, even as it fell by 121,000 in the 26 forced-unionism states.

"The most reasonable conclusion to draw from the data is that, on the whole, breadwinners and their spouses find that they can't provide as well for their families in forced-unionism states as they can in Right to Work states, once regional cost-of-living differences are considered.

"This is where the data have been pointing for decades, and the trend is unlikely to change at any time in the foreseeable future."

Attempts by Forced-Unionism Apologists to Explain Away Data Fall Dismally Short

Dyed-in-the-wool Big Labor apologists such as University of Oregon "labor studies" professor Gordon Lafer sometimes try to dismiss the secular influx of Americans into Right to Work states by suggesting it consists mostly of elderly people seeking places with good weather rather than job opportunities.

In a May 2011 op-ed for *Politico* he penned on behalf of the forced dues-funded Economic Policy Institute, for example, Dr. Lafer suggested the lure of "warm weather" and "sunny beaches" for "retirees" was behind the net migration of nearly five million Americans into Right to Work states from 2000 to 2009.

Unfortunately for Dr. Lafer and his ilk, this convenient theory is not borne out by the data. As we have already seen, BOC statistics show an outsized share of the net migration into Right to Work states as a group consists of working families with children.

Compulsory Union Dues And Fees Bankroll Growth-Hindering Politicians

And it's not just employees and employers in states that lack Right to Work laws who are harmed by federally-imposed compulsory unionism.

"Union bosses funnel a huge portion of the forced dues and fees they collect with federal policy's abetment into politics," Mr. Mix pointed out.

"Ideological proponents of heavier taxation and ever-more stringent regulation of business are well aware of this fact, and that's why they typically favor forced union dues in practice, even if they don't really support them in principle.

"For example, in a June 2014 commentary, *Vox* Executive Editor Matthew Yglesias made it clear he regards the fact that union bosses routinely 'intervene in politics' on behalf of causes he regards as 'progressive' as a point in favor of giving them coercive special privileges over the individual employee.

"The union-label politicians who routinely get elected and reelected because of their forced-dues-funded support overwhelmingly favor higher taxes and more red-tape regulation of businesses. This is true at the federal, state and local levels."

CREDIT TO: SAIRA BLAIR CAMPAIGN PHOTO

Pundit Matthew Yglesias has tried to justify forced dues on the grounds that they often bankroll "progressive politics"!

Forced-Dues Repeal Would Remove a Massive Impediment To Economic Growth

The actions of forced-dues-funded politicians result in less economic growth nationwide.

But if Congress repealed all the forced-dues provisions in the NLRA and the RLA, this massive impediment to national economic growth would be lifted.

"Forced-dues repeal would spur job growth in all 50 states," predicted Mr. Mix.

"Businesses based in current Right to Work states would share in the benefits as their major out-of-state suppliers and customers were freed from the burdens of compulsory unionism."

CREDIT TO: SAIRA BLAIR CAMPAIGN PHOTO

Forced-dues-funded politicians at all levels overwhelmingly favor higher taxes and more red-tape regulation of businesses. Consequently, taxpayers and businesses of all kinds have a stake in the Right to Work fight.

Monopolistic Trade Unionism 'an Alien Thing'

Big Labor Lawyers Paul Smith, Tom Geoghegan Confront the Truth

For decades, Big Labor bosses have sought to perpetuate and expand their special legal privileges to get workers fired for refusal to join or bankroll a union they don't want, and never asked for, by impugning the motives of such workers.

Union bigwigs are galled by the fact that, in the 24 Right to Work states, employees who refuse to join the union that wields monopoly-bargaining power in their workplace can thereby refuse to pay dues or fees to that union.

The primary motivation for many employees to resist bankrolling their union monopoly-bargaining agent is their belief that the union hierarchy is acting contrary to their economic interests.

Union propagandists typically pretend otherwise.

Over and over again, they have insinuated that the vast majority of, if not all, employees in Right to Work states who exercise their legal prerogative to refuse to pay dues or fees to an unwanted union actually approve of what the union is doing.

But over the past year, two prominent union lawyers -- Paul Smith and Tom Geoghegan -- have dropped the pretense and publicly acknowledged that many workers have solid grounds for believing they are economically harmed by union monopoly bargaining.

CREDIT: DIEGO M. RADZINSCHI/NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

Early last year, union lawyer Paul Smith admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court that Big Labor believes it has a constitutional prerogative to force employees to pay dues or fees for detrimental union-boss "representation."

Teachers Are Forced to 'Pay' A Union to 'Make an Argument' With Which They Disagree

Mr. Smith, a Washington, D.C.-based lawyer, represented Service Employees International Union (SEIU) bosses in the case *Harris v. Quinn*. At oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in January 2014, he was pushed into a corner thanks to the persistent questioning of Justice Sam Alito.

(In *Harris v. Quinn*, Big Labor sought unsuccessfully to get a constitutional green light to extract forced fees from home care providers who aren't government or business employees. The care providers were represented free of charge by National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation attorneys.)

At one point, the justice brought up the example, well-grounded in reality, of a teacher union that opposes merit pay and any change in the tenure system, and a teacher who is not a union member and "disagrees completely with the union on these issues."

Even though the teacher is not a union member, continued Mr. Alito, he "still has to pay a pretty hefty agency fee, maybe $700 a year.

"So the teacher is paying this money to the union to make an argument to the employer with which the teacher completely disagrees."

Mr. Alito subsequently asked what Mr. Smith would say to such an employee.

Mr. Smith then had no choice but to insist that the forced-dues "requirement is an appropriate thing which a public employer is allowed to impose" on employees who are harmed by a union as well as those who may be helped.

Union Bosses 'Take a Chunk Of People's Paychecks Without Their Consent'

In his new book *Only One Thing Can Save Us*, published late last year, Mr. Smith's fellow union lawyer Tom Geoghegan went a step further by acknowledging it's no surprise that workers regard forced union dues as unfair and that its reliance on compulsion discredits unionism altogether in the eyes of many.

"What makes [organized] labor an alien thing" among U.S. workers, wrote Mr. Geoghegan regretfully, "is that it can take a chunk of people's paychecks without their consent."

Mr. Geoghegan further admitted that, under the monopoly-bargaining system of unionism enshrined by U.S. labor law, it is very difficult for workers either to change or escape from a union that is harming them.

Consequently, "[organized] labor looks like one more alien thing over which people have no control."

Matthew Leen, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee, cautioned that, as noteworthy as Mr. Smith's and Mr. Geoghegan's recent admissions are, there's no good reason to believe either has had a fundamental change of heart.

"Paul Smith's admission that forced dues for harmful 'representation' are a key Organized Labor objective came only under duress," Mr. Leen explained.

"Tom Geoghegan laments worker alienation from Big Labor mostly because he wants union bosses to be even more effective in carrying out their class-warfare schemes than they already are.

"But the truth is a valuable thing, no matter whence it comes."

Hierarchy of Notorious Union Gets Rewarded

Lifting Federal Oversight of Teamster Brass Sends 'Wrong Message'

For decades, Inside-the-Beltway politicians have again and again sullied themselves and the American public's view of how Washington, D.C., works by turning a blind eye to Teamster union-boss corruption.

One noteworthy example is the Nixon Administration's 1971 decision to pardon Teamster czar Jimmy Hoffa well before he had served out his 13-year sentence for mail fraud and attempted bribery of a federal jury.

'Corrupt and Undemocratic Practices Persist at All Levels of the Union'

More recently, the George W. Bush Administration publicly toyed from 2001 to 2003 with cutting an outrageous deal to end federal oversight over the Teamsters, even as major cases of ongoing rampant Teamster-boss corruption and orchestration of strike violence were making national news.

And just last month, it was publicly reported that Preet Bharara, the President Obama-appointed U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York, had cut a deal with the Teamster union hierarchy that could potentially entrust ethically-challenged Big Labor bosses with the job of policing themselves.

As recently as last June, Mr. Bharara publicly admitted that, 25 years after Teamster union officials had entered into a consent decree with the federal government to avoid prosecution on an array of felony charges, "corrupt and undemocratic practices persist at all levels of the union . . . ."

Former Boston Teamster Chief Faces Sentence For Extortion, Racketeering This Month

Nevertheless, Mr. Bharara has now seen fit to join with current Teamster President Jim Hoffa (son of Jimmy) in submitting a request to Judge Loretta Preska that she allow court supervision of Teamster activities to be phased out over the next five years. (At press time, the deal still awaits Judge Preska's approval.)

National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix observed that Barack Obama and his advisors had started laying the groundwork for lifting federal oversight over the Teamster brass even before Mr. Obama was elected to his first White House term more than six years ago.

CREDIT: REUTERS

In early 2008, Barack Obama secured the backing of the Teamster political machine after secretly promising Jim Hoffa (left) he would end federal oversight over the Teamster brass if he won the Presidency.

"In May 2008, two Wall Street *Journal* reporters uncovered the fact that Mr. Obama had won the Teamster hierarchy's endorsement for President three months before by 'privately' telling the union 'he supported ending the strict federal oversight imposed to root out corruption,'" explained Mr. Mix.

The evidence of widespread ongoing corruption and lawlessness by Teamster union officials that continues to emerge year after year was plainly not sufficient to turn Mr. Obama from his plan to reward Jim Hoffa and his cohorts for their political support.

Just this month, for example, John Perry, the former czar of Teamsters Local 82 in Boston, is set to be sentenced to prison on multiple counts of racketeering and conspiracy.

Forced-Dues Repeal Could Actually Break Cycle Of Teamster Corruption

Mr. Perry and his coconspirator Joseph Burhoe extorted hotels, event planners, caterers, and other firms in order to generate money for themselves, their friends and their family members. Workers who spoke out against such lawbreaking were threatened and assaulted.

"Based on the recent crimes of John Perry and others like him, you could certainly argue that federal oversight has failed to get at the root of the problem of Teamster corruption," said Mr. Mix.

"The genuine way to break the cycle of violence and corruption is passage of the National Right to Work Act [H.R.612], recently introduced in Congress by Rep. Steve King [R-Iowa] and 76 original cosponsors.

"This legislation would make it far less difficult for rank-and-file Teamster members to fight union corruption by empowering them to resign and withhold all of their dues, without being fired as a consequence.

"But until this bill and other needed reforms are passed and signed, rewarding Jim Hoffa by ending federal oversight of the Teamsters sends the wrong message to the union rank-and-file and victims of Teamster violence.

"That's why Right to Work supporters across America are hoping Judge Preska will take a close look at Teamster officials' ongoing record of criminality and abuse of unionized employees and reject the Bharara-Hoffa deal."

Philadelphia Union Boss Convicted of Extortion

Appeal Based on Controversial 1973 Enmons *Decision a Possibility*

On January 20, after several days of deliberations, a federal jury in Pennsylvania convicted Joseph Dougherty, the former boss of Philadelphia-based Local 401 of the Ironworkers Union, of leading a conspiracy to exort and commit violence against union-free construction employees and businesses.

Prior to Mr. Dougherty's trial last month, 11 of his paid subordinates and militant followers had pleaded guilty to resorting again and again to assault, arson and vandalism to bring independent employees and employers into line.

At trial, the jury listened to testimony from several of Mr. Dougherty's former lieutenants, as well as multiple wiretapped phone calls, including one in which he asserted that "[y]ou should be able to do whatever you want" to people who dare to operate union-free "and it should be legal."

In the end, the jury convicted Mr. Dougherty on 25 counts of conspiracy to commit arson, property destruction and assault. The crimes were all carried out at construction sites in the Philadelphia area from 2008 to 2013.

Scope of *Enmons* Loophole Was At Issue in Pennsylvania Case

After being indicted for ext ortion, racketeering and conspiracy in early 2014, Mr. Dougherty and his cohorts first tried to get the charges dismissed based on the precedent set by a controversial, 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

Their motivation when ordering and committing assaults with baseball bats and tire slashings, smashing vehicles with crowbars, damaging construction equipment, and stealing construction materials, insisted the Ironworkers Local 401 defendants, was to advance "legitimate union objectives."

And according to the High Court's 1973 ruling in *U.S. v. Enmons*, union lawyers pointed out, threats, vandalism and violence perpetrated to secure "legitimate" Big Labor goals may not be prosecuted under the federal Hobbs Anti-Extortion Act.

But U.S. District Judge Michael Baylson, while agreeing that the use of "strike-related violence" to secure "legitimate" union contract demands does "not constitute Hobbs Act extortion,"

CREDIT: CHARLES FOX/PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

Joe Dougherty: "You should be able to do whatever you want" to union-free people "and it should be legal."

found that *Enmons* did not protect Joe Dougherty et al, because their targets were nonunion.

National Right to Work Committee Vice President Greg Mourad commended the judge for rejecting union lawyers' contention that *Enmons* must be applied even to extortionate violence committed against nonunion business owners who aren't legally required to negotiate with union bosses over anything.

But he also noted that, now that Joe Dougherty has been convicted and faces a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison for his crimes, his lawyers may appeal the conviction by claiming that Judge Baylson interpreted the *Enmons* precedent too narrowly in rejecting their motion for dismissal.

After the jury announced its guilty verdict in *U.S. v. Joseph Dougherty*, prosecutor Robert Livermore declared that a message had been sent that "[e]verybody has to follow the law." But unfortunately, as long as the *Enmons* precedent stands, that's just not so.

Freedom From Union Violence Act Would Close *Enmons* Loophole

"As Judge Baylson himself acknowledged just last summer, union thugs who target non-striking employees or the property of a unionized business whose owner refuses to acquiesce to Big Labor demands don't have to follow the law," explained Mr. Mourad.

"They can orchestrate and/or commit acts of extortionate violence without facing prosecution under the Hobbs Act as long as they have 'legitimate union objectives.'

"Fortunately, pro-Right to Work Congressman Steve King [R-Iowa] recently let Committee legislative officers know he would soon introduce in Congress a measure to overturn *Enmons* and hold union bosses who orchestrate threats and violence accountable under the Hobbs Act.

"Because *Enmons* was a matter of statutory, rather than constitutional, interpretation, Congress retains the power to reverse it legislatively. And that's exactly what Mr. King's soon-to-be-introduced bill, the Freedom from Union Violence Act, would do."

Mr. Mourad vowed that Committee members nationwide would fight hard to build Capitol Hill support for this much-needed reform.

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Union Bosses Kick Scranton While It's Down

State Monopoly-Bargaining Law Ties Local Elected Officials' Hands

For years, National Right to Work Committee members and supporters have lobbied their state elected officials to revoke or, at a minimum, roll back union bosses' privileges to act as public servants' monopoly-bargaining agents on matters concerning pay, benefits, and work rules.

Recently these patient efforts have borne fruit in a number of states. Just four years ago, for example, mobilized (in part by the Committee) Wisconsin citizens played an important role in helping the labor-policy and budget-reform package known as Act 10 overcome Big Labor opposition and pass into law.

Today Act 10 protects the vast majority of Badger State public employees from forced union dues. It has also sharply curtailed most government union bosses' monopoly power to dictate terms of employment.

Unfortunately, legislators in many state capitals, such as Harrisburg, Pa., still appear reluctant to learn from the example of Act 10 and take on government union monopoly bargaining, even when the need to do so is manifest and urgent.

The ongoing travails of Scranton, the largest city in northeastern Pennsylvania, are a case in point.

CREDIT: NEXSTAR BROADCASTING

Regardless of whether or not they personally are willing to stand up to Big Labor, Pennsylvania's monopoly-bargaining law gives local politicians like Scranton Mayor Bill Courtright little room to maneuver.

Scranton's Current Population Barely More Than Half Of What It Was in 1940

With a population that has shrunk by 46% since 1940, and by 27% just since 1970, and a median household income of roughly $38,500 (some $14,000 below the state average), Scranton desperately needs to get control over its sky-high municipal-employee costs.

Unfortunately, state labor laws mandating government union monopoly bargaining have for decades made it effectively impossible for Scranton's elected officials to do their jobs.

In 2011, a court order citing Pennsylvania's pro-Big Labor "binding arbitration" law jacked up public-safety employee pensions by as much as 80% when the city was already struggling to pay its bills.

To cover the cost of the bonuses, pay increases, and reduced deductibles procured by union lawyers in court, Scranton officials finally raised 2014 property taxes by more than 50%. Property taxes are expected to soar another 20% this year. The charge for garbage collection has skyrocketed by two-thirds.

Last month, Mayor Bill Courtright (D) claimed he finally had some good news for Scranton taxpayers after public-safety union chiefs agreed to renegotiate contract provisions concerning overtime and retirement health benefits.

Unfortunately, in order to procure modest improvements in outrageous union work rules, including one that bars civilians from writing parking tickets, Mr. Courtright had to agree to impose potentially vast new costs on taxpayers.

For example, according to the Scranton *Times-Tribune*, under a proposed new "unused sick-days" payout scheme, an officer who works for 25 years, uses seven of the 18 allotted sick days per year, and has base cash earnings of roughly $63,000 could be paid more than $34,000 extra upon retirement for "unused sick days."

System Encourages Public Employees to Cheat Taxpayers

Recognizing that the deal the mayor cut with union monopolists would likely leave Scranton taxpayers even worse off than they are now, the city council has so far refused to approve it. But that just leaves an unsustainable status quo in place.

"By repealing Pennsylvania's monopoly-bargaining laws, state lawmakers could empower local governments like Scranton's to make routine budget decisions for their jurisdictions without getting government union bosses' seal of approval," noted Mary King, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Then, if there were evidence that public-safety employees were routinely calling in sick when they weren't, and thus jacking up overtime costs needlessly, the city could simply require employees to furnish proof from an independent physician that they really were sick when they said they were.

"There would be no purported 'need' to bribe employees to persuade them not to lie about being sick by allowing them to cash in tens of thousands of dollars in 'unused sick days' upon retirement.

"To put it bluntly, the union monopoly-bargaining system encourages public employees to cheat taxpayers, even in jurisdictions like Scranton, where most taxpayers have little money to spare."

Right to Work 'Long Overdue'

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"And studies have shown that states where workers are allowed to make this choice for themselves have higher employment levels, and companies locate there more often.

"It's time we protect the paychecks of New Mexico workers. It's common sense, and it is long overdue."

New Mexico, Missouri and New Hampshire Await Right To Work Showdowns

Grass-roots Right to Work supporters in the Land of Enchantment are cautiously optimistic about securing a recorded floor vote on legislation banning forced union dues this year, in part because of the governor's forthright public support.

A second and related factor making a roll-call vote a strong possibility is that, among the 13 legislative races targeted in New Mexico's Right to Work candidate survey program last year, candidates pledging 100% opposition to compulsory unionism emerged victorious in 12.

Two other states where freedom-loving citizens are very hopeful about putting their elected officials on the record on the Right to Work issue in 2015 are Missouri and New Hampshire.

Last year, activists successfully lobbied for Right to Work votes in the Missouri House and the New Hampshire Senate. While neither measure passed, the votes enabled workplace freedom advocates to hold a number of politicians who had voted "no" accountable in 2014.

In the Show Me State, for example, seven state representatives who had voted against Right to Work were defeated in the November elections, but every representative voting "yes" was reelected. Moreover, Rep. John Diehl (R-Town and Country), who as majority leader brought up Right to Work for a vote in 2014, was elected speaker early this year.

Other states where debates and roll-call votes on Right to Work measures are possible this year include West Virginia, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Montana, Delaware and Maine.

With compulsory-unionism apologists on the defensive in state after state, pro-Right to Work Americans have a lot to be pleased about in 2015. But they must also remain vigilant to avoid pitfalls.

CREDIT: THE OLYMPIA (WASH.)

Public-safety officers' Right to Work is every bit as much deserving of protection as that of other employees. Yet some self-styled "pro-Right to Work" politicians have difficulty understanding this fact.

'Carve Outs' Send Discordant Message to Pro-Right to Work Citizens

Last month, self-avowedly pro-Right to Work state Senate leaders in Kentucky fell into one such trap when the chamber voted to approve a Right to Work Bill (S.B.1) including a "carve out" provision.

This "carve out" explicitly states that government employers "dealing with public safety" will continue to be able to cut deals with union kingpins to force employees to pay union dues or fees, or be fired.

Grass-roots Right to Work champions fear that, in practice, since virtually all public employers have a police department or a sheriff's office, this "carve out" could potentially keep virtually all public employees subject to forced unionism.

But even if it turns out that, as interpreted by the courts, the law leaves only public-safety employees under union bosses' forced-dues control, it will send a discordant message to ordinary citizens who support Right to Work.

Inconsistently Applied Laws Are Vulnerable To Court Challenges

And unfortunately, one of the four Right to Work measures that have so far been introduced in New Mexico explicitly "carves out" all public-sector employees.

"Gov. Martinez was absolutely correct in her State of the State Address when she declared that it is 'fundamentally wrong to . . . take money from the paychecks of workers in order to get a job,'" said Mr. Mix.

"But the message sent by S.B.92, a so-called 'Right to Work' Bill, is that it's only wrong when the worker is employed in the private sector."

Besides bespeaking a lack of commitment to principle on the part of the politicians who support them, Mr. Mix added, Right to Work measures including "carve outs" are, like all inconsistently applied laws, potentially vulnerable to court challenges.

Compulsory Unionism 'Fundamentally Wrong'

Right to Work Legislation Proliferates Across The Land

In 2015, union officials and their forced-dues-funded political machine continue to wield enormous clout in state capitals across the country. But the fear Big Labor inspires is not as great as it was just a few short years ago.

The reason isn't hard to see.

For decades, the Great Lakes region of the U.S., encompassing six Midwestern states (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio) plus Pennsylvania and New York, was widely regarded as an impregnable forced-unionism stronghold.

But since 2011, three Great Lakes states -- Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan -- have adopted and implemented major labor-policy reforms rolling back union bosses' monopoly privileges.

In the Badger State, legislators passed and GOP Gov. Scott Walker signed into law a measure, known as Act 10, repealing government union bosses' statutory power to collect forced union dues.

Other Act 10 provisions greatly narrowed the scope of government union bosses' monopoly-bargaining privileges. (Unfortunately, the law exempts public-safety union officials.)

Indiana and Michigan approved, respectively, the 23rd and 24th state Right to Work laws, prohibiting the exaction of compulsory union dues or fees as a job condition from employees who prefer not to join the union.

CREDIT: JEFFREY MACMILLAN/WASHINGTON POST

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez: "[I]t is fundamentally wrong to . . . take money from the paychecks of our workers in order to get a job. For these workers, this is gas money, rent, or a car payment."

If Michigan and Indiana Can Do It, 'There's No Reason We Can't Do It Here, Too'

In Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan, national union bosses like AFL-CIO czar Richard Trumka and their operatives vowed to get revenge on the elected officials who had dared to curtail their special privileges.

But the net result of the various special "recall" elections union bosses engineered in Wisconsin to punish Gov. Walker and his legislative allies and the regularly scheduled elections of 2012 and 2014 has been resounding voter commendation for the politicians who stood up to Big Labor.

Executive-branch officials targeted by the union machine have been reelected by decisive margins. Pro-Right to Work legislative majorities have expanded. In Michigan, not a single legislator who had voted for Right to Work just after the 2012 elections was defeated in 2014!

State politicians in Indiana and Michigan were able to vote successfully for Right to Work and not only live to tell about it, but actually flourish in the wake of the battle. And this has definitely caught the attention of politicians in a number of other states where forced union dues are still permitted.

"In more and more of the 26 remaining forced-unionism states this year, elected officials as well as citizen activists are saying, if Indiana and Michigan can pass Right to Work laws, there's no reason we can't do it here, too," commented Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

The State of the State Address delivered by New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez (R) on January 20 is representative of a new attitude among many state elected officials who may have always supported Right to Work in principle, but were previously reluctant to make it part of their agenda.

Susana Martinez: 'This Isn't a Complicated Concept, And Most People Agree'

Just a few minutes into her speech, Ms. Martinez called a state Right to Work law a "common-sense measure" that "we can enact this year" and will "make New Mexico a more attractive place to do business."

She continued: "I firmly believe that every person should be allowed to choose for themselves whether they want to join a union or contribute to one.

"This isn't a complicated concept, and most people agree. If a worker wants to join a union, then they will. But it is fundamentally wrong to take money from the paychecks of our workers in order to get a job. For these workers, this is gas money, rent, or a car payment.

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