



# NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK NEWSLETTER

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## Missouri Becomes the 28th Right to Work State *Union Bosses Vow to Change State Constitution to Overturn Reform*

Throughout last fall's hard-fought gubernatorial showdown in Missouri between Right to Work advocate Eric Greitens (R) and Big Labor apologist Chris Koster (D), political observers of all stripes agreed compulsory unionism was on the ballot.

No one doubted that a Greitens victory would lead promptly to adoption of a Missouri Right to Work law.

That's why the forced-dues-fueled union political machine went all out to bolster the Koster campaign.

### After a Brief Celebration, Right to Work Allies Began Preparing For Counterattack

"Right-to-Work Debate Puts National Spotlight on Missouri Governor's Race" was the apt headline for a news story filed late last August by St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* reporter Kevin McDermott.

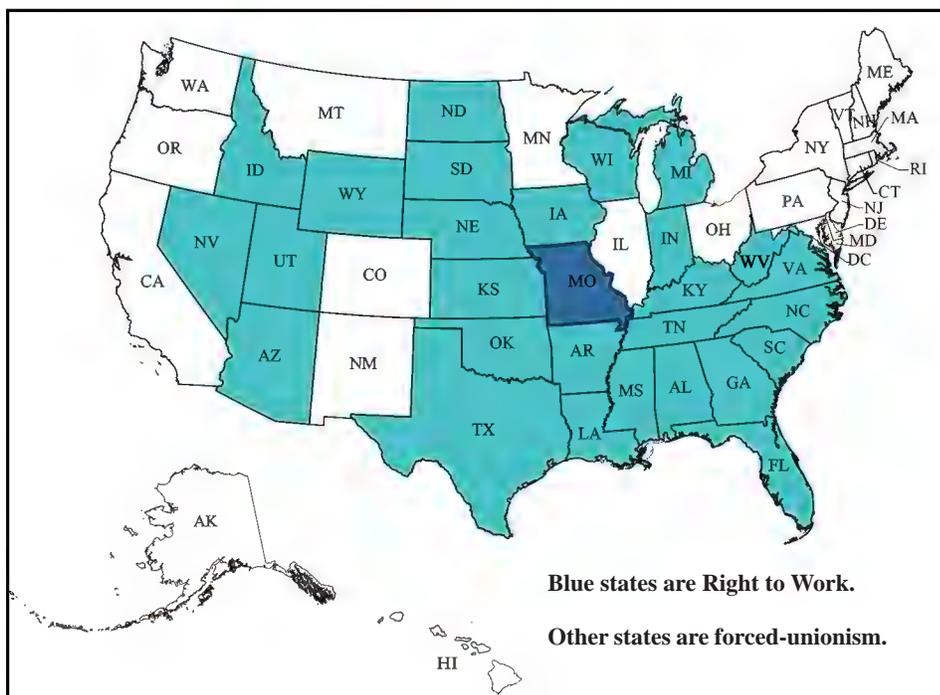
To illustrate his point, Mr. McDermott quoted fervently pro-forced unionism state Rep. Jake Hummel (D-St. Louis):

"For organized labor, it is make-or-break. . . . If we don't get Chris Koster elected, Missouri will very quickly be a right-to-work state."

On the campaign trail, Mr. Greitens enthusiastically courted the support of the overwhelming majority of Missourians who agree with the Right to Work principle.

He vowed again and again to fight for passage of a state Right to Work law, because compulsory unionism is morally wrong and also because, in his words, "Missouri has lost countless good-paying jobs to more business-friendly states."

In the end, despite the fact that Big Labor spent, by its own admission, a total of more than \$12 million to retain control over the Missouri governorship, voters backed the pro-Right to Work candidate



Since early 2012, six states have adopted laws banning compulsory union dues, bringing the total number of Right to Work states to 28. But Big Labor remains determined to regain its forced-dues privileges whenever possible.

for chief executive by a solid margin.

Just as important, voters returned to office all Right to Work-supporting legislators in the Missouri House and Senate who sought reelection.

And roughly three months later, on February 2, the Missouri Legislature fulfilled the mandate it had plainly been given by the citizens of the state when it sent S.B.19, legislation prohibiting the termination of employees for refusal to join or bankroll a union, to Gov. Greitens' desk.

Within a short period of time, the governor signed the measure into law.

Unfortunately, freedom-loving Missourians who had for years been working

to pass a state law revoking union officials' forced-dues and forced-fee privileges could only briefly celebrate their victory.

### Big Labor's Fact-Mangling 2011 Ohio Campaign Inspires Missouri AFL-CIO Czar

That's because, even before S.B.19 was adopted by the House and Senate, Big Labor had announced publicly that it would attempt to strangle Missouri's new Right to Work Law in the cradle.

In describing his scheme to eliminate

See Missouri page 2

# Missouri Constitution Targeted

Continued from page 1

Right to Work protections for employees by changing the Missouri Constitution, state AFL-CIO President Mike Louis has repeatedly cited Big Labor's fact-mangling, but successful 2011 campaign against an Ohio labor-law reform package adopted early that year.

Ohio's S.B.5 was primarily designed to lessen the monopoly power that government union bosses had amassed over taxpayers and government workers since 1983. That was the year Big Labor Gov. Dick Celeste (D) signed a law foisting public-sector union "exclusivity" on the Buckeye State.

Near the end of the legislative debate over S.B.5, provisions were added protecting the Right to Work of all categories of state and local public employees.

Under state law, government union chiefs were first able to use a petition campaign to prevent S.B.5 from ever taking effect. And in November 2011 they managed to wipe it off the books in a statewide referendum battle.

## 'Cautiously Optimistic' Ohio Debacle Won't Recur in Missouri

The multimillion-dollar TV advertising blitz union bosses deployed against S.B.5 (re-labeled for the referendum as "Issue 2") predicted that, if Ohio voters allowed this law to remain on the books, vast numbers of teachers, policemen and firefighters would lose their jobs.

In reality, S.B.5 would not have

reduced in any way the amount of money local governments receive from the state to maintain their schools and public-safety departments.

It would, however, have allowed elected officials to use the money they have at their disposal more effectively by curtailing government union bosses' monopolistic power to obstruct needed reforms in compensation and work-rule policies.

"There is no doubt that Big Labor's successful propaganda campaign to quash S.B.5 a little more than five years ago was a setback for taxpayers, independent-minded public employees, and other freedom-loving citizens in Ohio," said National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix.

"However, I am cautiously optimistic that, despite the wishes and the forced dues-derived warchest of Mike Louis and his cohorts, the S.B.5 debacle will not repeat itself if and when the union hierarchy manages to get one or more measures to overturn Missouri's Right to Work Law on a statewide ballot."

Mr. Mix vowed that the Committee sister organization that he also heads, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, would work with concerned Missouri citizens to ensure the ballot language for any Right to Work destruction scheme does not conceal from voters what is at stake, as occurred in Ohio.

He also vowed that Committee staff would help Gov. Greitens and other prominent pro-Right to Work elected officials educate ordinary Missourians

about what union bosses are up to so they can respond appropriately.

Mr. Mix pointed out that, over the years, the National Right to Work organizations have time and again successfully defended state bans on forced union dues and fees from Big Labor attacks in court and at the ballot box.

"Apparently, freedom-loving citizens in the 'Show Me' State will have to re-fight the Right to Work battle from now until November 2018," he acknowledged.

## 'Right to Work Has Come a Long Way Over The Past Five Years'

"But it remains a fact that Right to Work has come a long way over the past five years," Mr. Mix added.

"Just since the beginning of 2012, six states have adopted laws that protect employees from being forced either to bankroll a union they would never join voluntarily, or face termination.

"When Gov. Greitens put his signature on S.B.19 in February, making Missouri America's 28th Right to Work state, less than a month had gone by since neighboring Kentucky's approval of the 27th state Right to Work law!

"Yet another state, New Hampshire, could also go Right to Work this winter."

Of course, Committee members will continue fighting until no workers, anywhere in America, can be forced to pay union dues or fees simply so they can keep their jobs and support their families.

On behalf of all Committee members, Mr. Mix offered his "warm congratulations to freedom-loving Missourians and the elected officials who heeded their pleas to stand up to Big Labor."

He specifically mentioned Mr. Greitens, House Speaker Todd Richardson (R-Poplar Bluff), Rep. Holly Rehder (R-Sikeston), Senate Majority Leader Mike Kehoe (R-Jefferson City) and Sen. Dan Brown (R-Rolla).

"This is a critical landmark in a persistent, hard-fought battle to end compulsory unionism in the 'Show Me' State," said Mr. Mix.

"The National Committee has for years been calling on candidates in Missouri to pledge 100% support for Right to Work, and giving encouragement and counsel to grass-roots citizens seeking to pass a state law revoking union officials' forced-dues and forced-fee privileges.

"And the Committee will now with equal determination and steadfastness fight to defend Missouri's Right to Work Law from Big Labor attacks." 🗳️



In January, National Committee Vice President Greg Mourad (right) told Missouri lawmakers: "The collection of forced dues is so odious" that even its apologists can only "defend it on the basis of expediency, not principle."

## History Indicates Wages Will Rise in Right to Work Missouri

On November 8, Big Labor's favored gubernatorial and state legislative candidates got shellacked in Missouri, as voters rejected union bosses' agenda of more and more monopoly privileges for themselves and ever-higher taxes for hardworking citizens.

Moreover, as the gubernatorial showdown between Right to Work advocate Eric Greitens and Big Labor apologist Chris Koster heated up in the months prior to Election Day, political observers of all stripes agreed the perpetuation of compulsory unionism was on the ballot in the Show-Me State.

A June 2016 article in the Kansas City Star bluntly acknowledged that the "huge" Big Labor support Mr. Koster was already receiving was largely due to his "vehement opposition to a right to work law . . . ." But after he was nominated in August, Greitens vowed again and again on the campaign trail to fight for passage of a state Right to Work statute . . . .

[V]oters ultimately backed the pro-Right to Work candidate for chief executive by a solid six percentage point margin. Voters also returned to office all Right to Work-supporting legislators in the Missouri House and Senate who sought re-election.

Because of the resounding defeat suffered by union bosses at the polls on Election Day, even hardened Right to Work foes now admit legislation banning the termination of employees for refusal to pay dues or fees to an unwanted union is very likely to become law in early 2017.

If Missouri does indeed become a Right to Work state, what will it mean for Show-Me State employees? The most important thing is that they will be free to refuse, without risking their jobs, to pay for union-boss services they don't want and never asked for. But what effect will Right to Work have on their earnings?

History indicates that wages will rise in Right to Work Missouri. Since early 2012, four states have banned compulsory union dues, and in two of these states — Indiana and Michigan — unionism has now been voluntary for at least three years [Kentucky's Right to Work law was adopted after this op-ed was written-ed.]. What has happened to workers' wages in these two states?

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, the average weekly earnings for Indiana private-sector employees in March 2012, the month the Hoosier State's Right to Work law took effect, were \$732.48. In November 2016, the most recent month for which data are now available, the BLS estimates that the average weekly earnings of Indiana private-sector employees were \$834.75.

In a little more than four-and-a-half years, then, weekly earnings per private worker in Indiana have risen by 14 percent, or 8.3 percent after adjusting for inflation, as measured by the BLS urban consumer price index. And this 8.3 percent real increase stands in stark contrast to the 0.7 percent decline in real weekly earnings for comparable Missouri employees over the

same period.

The BLS data for Michigan, whose Right to Work law took effect in March 2013, tell a very similar story. From March 2013 through November 2016, real weekly earnings per private-sector employee in Michigan went up by 5.3 percent, while they declined by 0.7 percent over the same period for Missouri workers.

Since the 25th and 26th state Right to Work laws, adopted in Wisconsin in early 2015 and West Virginia early last year, have only been in effect a very short time, it is too early to draw firm conclusions from the BLS data for these states. But it is worth pointing out that, so far, private sector weekly wage growth is also outpacing inflation in Wisconsin and West Virginia since they became Right to Work.

Unfortunately, the fact that, for years, the adoption of state Right to Work laws has been associated with wage gains outpacing inflation and the national average doesn't deter self-interested union officials and their allies in the media and academia from predicting economic catastrophe if a state opts to make unionism voluntary.

Ordinary Missouri citizens who know in their hearts that it's just plain wrong for any employee to be forced to bankroll a union as a job condition should simply ignore Big Labor predictions . . . .

*Stan Greer, Senior Research Associate, National Institute for Labor Relations Research.*

**Employees 'will be free to refuse, without risking their jobs, to pay for union-boss services they don't want . . . .'**

**For years, 'the adoption of state Right to Work laws has been associated with wage gains outpacing inflation and the national average . . . .'**

*One week after this op-ed was published by the Springfield (Mo.) News-Leader, Right to Work legislation was approved by the Missouri House of Representatives.*

# Unionized Iron Workers Face Steep Pension Cuts

## Barack Obama's 'Parting Gift' Leaves Many Retirees in the Lurch

Just over two years ago, Barack Obama signed a measure altering 40 years of labor law, and paving the way for unprecedented cuts in benefits for current retirees in troubled multiemployer pension plans.

As of early 2017, according to nationally syndicated financial columnist Terry Savage, 67 multiemployer plans covering nearly a million workers -- virtually all if not all of them unionized -- have already "filed with the government to be classified as 'critical and declining.'"

Under the so-called "Multiemployer Pension Reform Act" (MPRA), rubber-stamped by a "lame duck" Congress in December 2014, plans that are classified as "critical and declining" are potentially eligible to reduce pension benefits by 30% to 65%.

### 'The Question Is When And How [Benefit Cuts] Are Going to Happen'

In public, union bosses try to disavow responsibility for the MPRA.

But the fact is, the MPRA could never have been adopted without the support of the bosses of multiple unions whose rank-and-file members now face drastic pension benefit cuts.

In 2013, William Hite, general president of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry (UA), endorsed the original blueprint for the MPRA, known as "Solutions, Not Bailouts," when it was issued by a commission on multi-employer pension reform.

Mr. Hite declared that the SNB proposal, essentially identical in key regard to the measure ultimately introduced by Reps. George Miller (D-Calif.) and John Kline (R-Minn.) and adopted by Congress, would make "retirement plans more secure."

Tom Nyhan, executive director of the Teamster Union's Central States, Southeast & Southwest Areas Pension Fund, was unapologetic about the fact that the SNB plan would cut retiree benefits sharply:

"We are going -- it's not a question of if there are going to benefit cuts.

"There are going to be benefit cuts. The question is when and how they are going to happen."

Late last year the pension fund



CREDIT: ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, COURTESY OF WALT & PAT OVERSTREET

When Ohio iron worker Walter Overstreet was working, union trustees who had access to his retirement fund's books never told him it was in trouble. Now he and his wife face a huge cut in their pension benefits.

comanaged by the Cleveland-based Iron Workers Local 17 union became the first in the U.S. to receive approval from the Obama Treasury Department to slash benefits for its members.

### 'Hobson's Choice' For Western Ohio Iron Workers

Consequently, in January roughly 2000 forced dues- and forced fee-paying workers in western Ohio faced a Hobson's choice.

They could cast a vote in favor of losing up to half of their benefits starting February 1.

Or they could vote potentially to lose *all* of their pension benefits when Local 17's grossly underfunded pension plan runs out of money in 2024.

And the key reason why the Local 17 pension plan and many other similar Big Labor-dominated "multiemployer" plans are underfunded is that union officials never even tried to get a sufficiently high share of employees' compensation packages set aside for pensions to make the promised benefits a reality.

Not surprisingly, a majority of Local 17-"represented" workers who voted reluctantly backed severe pension cuts for all but the most elderly and/or infirm among them, rather than risk losing all of their pension benefits.

National Right to Work Committee Vice President Greg Mourad commented:

"One of the handful of jobs that iron workers, Teamsters, plumbers, and other union bosses are supposed to do in exchange for the vast sums of conscripted money they take in is to ensure that the pensions workers are promised are there when workers need them."

### Union Bosses Must Have Long Been Aware There Was a Grave Problem

"But now it's obvious," Mr. Mourad continued, "that a large share of forced dues-paying workers in multiemployer plans did not have secure pensions -- and union pension trustees and other union officials who had access to the books must have been aware there was a grave problem for decades.

"And the problem is getting worse and worse.

"If Big Labor had leveled with future retirees years ago, it would at least have given workers time to prepare.

"This is another distressing illustration of just how little union bosses deserve their forced-dues privileges. And of how readily politicians like Barack Obama will do Big Labor bosses' bidding, even if unionized workers are the people getting hurt." 📌

# Trump Education Nominee Supports Right to Work

## Betsy DeVos Outspokenly Championed Forced-Dues Ban in Michigan

This winter, national teacher union bigwigs Lily Eskelsen Garcia and Randi Weingarten and other union bosses are trying to bully the U.S. Senate into rejecting President Trump's nomination of Betsy DeVos, the founder and leader of the American Federation for Children (AFC), as U.S. Education Secretary.

Big Labor venomously opposes the DeVos nomination for an array of reasons. But what undoubtedly infuriates union militants the most about her is her long record of active support for Right to Work measures, including the forced-dues ban adopted in her home state of Michigan in late 2012.

"By selecting Betsy DeVos to head the Education Department just two weeks after defeating Big Labor Democrat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 race for the White House, Donald Trump sent an encouraging signal to freedom-loving citizens across the U.S.," said National Right to Work Committee Vice President Mary King.

### Teacher Forced Unionism Imposed by State Statutes

"Arguably," Ms. King continued, "K-12 public schools today suffer more severe damage as a consequence of monopolistic unionism than any private industry or any other public institution.

"American schoolchildren and their parents, taxpayers, and independent-minded educators will benefit from having a U.S. education secretary who unapologetically opposes laws that put teachers under 'exclusive' Big Labor bargaining control and force them to pay union dues or fees as a job condition.

"Of course, teacher forced unionism is



CREDIT: BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

**Union bosses furiously oppose Betsy DeVos as "a rare reformer who has defeated them politically."**

imposed by state statutes, and Ms. DeVos, as she emphasized during her Senate confirmation hearing, will have no power to change such statutes.

"But Ms. DeVos will, if confirmed, be able to help many talented and conscientious teachers and people who value what they have to offer by continuing to speak out in support of public charter schools.

"At this time, charter schools remain overwhelmingly union-free, and they furnish a viable alternative for many educators who don't want to be corralled into a union."

According to a recent analysis published by the Los Angeles-based Reason Foundation, nearly three million schoolchildren across America are currently being educated at charter schools.

Charter school enrollment expanded

by 250,000 students during the 2015-2016 school year alone as 400 new charter schools opened.

Charters are public institutions that furnish their services to K-12 schoolchildren free of charge, but are subject to fewer regulations than traditional district public schools.

Big Labor is alarmed by the rapid rise of charters because, in stark contrast to district schools where roughly two-thirds of teachers are subject to union monopoly bargaining, only about 7% of charter schools were unionized as of 2012.

The Washington, D.C.-based AFC, which Ms. DeVos headed until she resigned in order to join the incoming Trump Administration, lobbies against state legislation and laws and bureaucratic schemes that unfairly hinder the expansion of charters and other alternatives to union boss-dominated public schools.

### Eighteen of the Top 25 Schools in Detroit Are Charters

Teachers who want to be eligible for merit-based raises, which are categorically opposed by the National Education Association (NEA) teacher union hierarchy, typically have a strong incentive to apply for jobs at charter schools.

And standardized test scores as well as parent satisfaction surveys indicate charters are making a positive contribution to the American education system.

For example, in Detroit, where Ms. DeVos and her husband, Richard, have had an especially great impact in championing charters, 18 of the top 25 schools are charters, according to a January 17 *Wall Street Journal* editorial.

Meanwhile, 23 of the city's bottom 25 are unionized district schools.

The *Journal* also noted that charter students in Detroit "on average score 60% more proficient on state tests than kids attending the city's traditional public schools."

Ms. King concurred with the *Journal's* assessment that the real reason for the union bosses' furious opposition to the DeVos nomination is that she is "a rare reformer who has defeated them politically."

"As long as Betsy DeVos sticks by the pro-Right to Work principles she has espoused up to now," said Ms. King, "she will have Committee members' full support." 

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# New Hampshire Senate Passes Right to Work Bill

## *Granite State Close to Becoming 29th to Bar Forced Union Dues*

As this Newsletter edition goes to press at the beginning of February, it appears quite possible that New Hampshire will soon become the third state just since the beginning of the year to enact a Right to Work law protecting employees from compulsory union dues and fees.

On January 19, a 12-11 majority of state senators present and voting heeded the pleas of their freedom-loving constituents and defied Big Labor bosses by approving S.B.11, a measure upholding the employee's individual right to get and hold a job without being forced to join or bankroll a union.

Since New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu (R) was elected last November on a pro-Right to Work platform, the union hierarchy's only remaining chance to thwart grass-roots citizens' efforts to make unionism voluntary this year is the state House of Representatives.

### House of Representatives Vote Is Also Expected To Be Very Close

Republican legislators now control New Hampshire's House by a 226-174 margin. And a clear majority of the GOP caucus campaigned and won on the Right to Work issue.

However, a relatively small number of

Republican representatives have histories of siding with union-label Democrats and voting against Right to Work.

For that reason, the House vote is expected to be close, just as the Senate one was.

Forced-unionism foes could either prevail, or fall short by just a few votes.

National Right to Work Committee Vice President Matthew Leen, who had testified in support of S.B.11 at a January 10 Senate panel hearing, vowed that the National Committee and its members would wage a full-scale citizen mobilization campaign for House passage of this bill.

### Lead Sponsor of S.B.11 Has Been a Dues-Paying Union Member For 50 Years

Mr. Leen explained that S.B.11 ought to be adopted, first and foremost, because compulsory unionism is just plain wrong.

"Every worker has the right to pay dues to a union, but no worker should be forced," he said.

Mr. Leen pointed out that poll after poll shows the vast majority of rank-and-file union members, along with other citizens from all walks of life, are repelled by the very notion that "people should have to pay to have a job."

In fact, S.B.11's lead sponsor, state Sen. John Reagan (Deerfield), is a retired Baltimore firefighter who has been a dues-paying union member for roughly half a century.

Mr. Reagan forthrightly explained his position before an audience largely consisting of union officials and their militant followers at the Senate Commerce Committee hearing on his Right to Work legislation:

"Even in my retirement I still pay dues to my union. . . . [B]ut I don't believe that you should be required to pay . . . as a condition of employment."

In his testimony, Mr. Leen was still more blunt.

It is an outrage, he told New Hampshire senators, to force people to pay for so-called "representation" that they did not ask for, do not want, and would be better off without.

Forced-unionism zealots in the crowd were so displeased by what Mr. Leen had to say that they booed him and tried to shout him down, earning a reprimand from the committee chairman.

### 'Bulk of the Credit' Should Go to Grass-Roots Citizen Activists

Now that it has been approved by the New Hampshire Senate, S.B.11 is guaranteed a House hearing and floor vote under state legislative rules. The outcome of the floor roll-call scheduled for February 16 remains unknown at this writing.

Mr. Leen recalled that, prior to the Senate vote, the National Committee and the Manchester, N.H.-based group New England Citizens for Right to Work contacted freedom-loving citizens across New Hampshire. These same citizens will be mobilized again prior to the House vote.

"Our regular sources inside the New Hampshire General Assembly believe there is a good chance that S.B.11 will win House approval," said Mr. Leen.

"Of course, the bulk of the credit should go to the grass-roots New Hampshire activists, many of them National Right to Work Committee members, who helped push this measure through the state Senate and will continue fighting until they prevail." 📣



At a January 10 New Hampshire Senate hearing, National Committee Vice President Matthew Leen bluntly testified about how the compulsory-unionism system operates in practice. Big Labor bosses and their militant followers weren't pleased.

# Problem Made in Washington, D.C.

Continued from page 8

\$3.808 trillion in cash compensation and benefits, or \$44,475 per employee.

Cost-of-living-adjusted compensation per employee is thus nearly \$1,600 higher in Right to Work states.

## Compulsory Union Dues And Fees Bankroll Growth-Hindering Policies

Mr. Mix pointed out that the combined BEA and MERIC data also show that the Right to Work employee compensation advantage has greatly widened over the course of the past few years.

In 2010, for example, when 22 states had bans on forced unionism on the books, the average cost-of-living-adjusted compensation per Right to Work state employee was \$110 higher than the average for states permitting the termination of employees for refusal to bankroll Big Labor.

"It makes perfect sense that employees' real purchasing power and the growth in their purchasing power would be higher in Right to Work states than in forced-unionism states," commented Mr. Mix.

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

"And 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 both large and small.

"The actions of forced dues-funded politicians thus result in slower revenue growth for business, and that generally means slower growth in cash pay and benefits for employees.

"Of course, Big Labor does the most damage in states where union bosses rake in the most forced-dues money.

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

## Federal Forced-Dues Repeal Would Benefit Workers and Businesses in All 50 States

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

the burden of compulsory unionism," Mr. Mix continued.

"Forced-dues repeal would spur accelerated income and job growth in all 50 states.

"The 2.8 million Committee members are now lobbying hard to build Capitol Hill support for H.R.785.

"Right to Work supporters are jubilant over the series of victories we have scored at the state level since late in Barack Obama's first term in the White House. That's entirely appropriate.

"But it shouldn't cause us to forget that it's Congress, not any state legislature, that spawned the evil of private-sector

forced union dues in the first place.

"And even in the 28 states that have now enacted Right to Work laws, because of federally imposed loopholes union bosses still wield the power to get railroad employees and employees on so-called 'exclusive federal enclaves' fired for refusal to pay dues or fees.

"Fortunately, H.R.785 would close these loopholes, which were drilled into all existing and future state Right to Work laws by Congress and the federal courts.

"The fact is, even as the Right to Work movement gains more and more strength, Congress continues to perpetuate the problem of private-sector forced union dues.

"Ultimately, Congress must solve it once and for all by passing the National Right to Work Act." 



Federal labor law empowers union bosses to get workers fired for refusal to pay dues or fees. Big Labor politicians benefit because union officials divert a large share of the money they extract from employees into electioneering schemes.

# Congressmen Propose National Right to Work Law

## *Pro-Forced Dues Federal Policy Harms Employees, Firms Nationwide*

On February 1, U.S. Reps. Steve King (R-Iowa) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) introduced legislation that would restore an important personal freedom for millions of American employees.

Reps. King and Wilson's H.R.785, also known as the National Right to Work Act, would not add a single word to federal labor law. Instead, it would simply repeal the current provisions that authorize compulsory union dues and fee payments as a condition of employment.

And by the time this Newsletter edition reaches its readers, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) is expected to have introduced companion legislation for H.R.785 in Congress' upper chamber.

### **Individual Freedom Would Be Protected In All 50 States**

"When the King-Wilson-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.785 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]."

### **Forced-Unionism States Far More Costly to Live in Than 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 2018, H.R.785 would likely have the strongest positive impact for incomes and jobs.

One key to understanding the connection between Right to Work and higher living standards is awareness of interstate differences in the cost of living.

The fact is, nonpartisan analysts such as the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC), a state government agency, consistently find that



CREDIT: NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK STAFF

**At a February 1 joint press conference on Capitol Hill, Reps. Steve King (R-Iowa, left) and Joe Wilson (R-S.C., right), joined by Committee President Mark Mix, announced the introduction of H.R.785, the National Right to Work Act.**

compulsory-unionism states as a group have a substantially higher cost of living than do Right to Work states as a group.

MERIC's data show that the 25 states that had Right to Work laws on the books as of 2015 had a population-weighted average cost of living that year of 94.2 -- 5.8% below the national average.

The forced-unionism states combined (excluding New Mexico, for which MERIC was unable to assemble annual 2015 cost-of-living data) had a population-weighted average cost of living of 117.8, or 17.8% above the national average.

In short, forced-unionism states were on average 25% more expensive to live in than Right to Work states in 2015.

When considered together with MERIC's cost-of-living data, statistics from the U.S. Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) show that the real purchasing power of the average Right to Work state employee's paycheck is greater than it is for the average forced-unionism state employee.

According to the BEA, in 2015 there were 76.306 million full-time and part-time private-sector employees (including contract workers and the self-employed as well as payroll employees) located in the 25 states that then had Right to Work laws on the books.

### **In 2015, Right to Work States' Compensation Advantage Was Nearly \$1600**

After adjusting BEA data for regional differences in the cost of living with the help of MERIC's indices for 2015, private-sector employees in Right to Work states earned a total of \$3.514 trillion in cash compensation and benefits that year.

That comes to \$46,057 per employee. Meanwhile, the 85.622 million private-sector employees in forced-unionism states took in a total of

*See Problem page 7*