



## The TRUTH about “RIGHT-to-WORK”

### **False Claims, False Promises: Why “Right-to-Work” Is Wrong for Everyone**

Across the country, public employees – nurses, teachers, firefighters, police – are facing a barrage of legislative attacks on their rights to form unions and bargain collectively, including so-called “right-to-work” legislation.

In Montana, “right-to-work” proposals are direct attacks on MEA-MFT members. We’ve seen “right-to-work” bills proposed repeatedly in the Montana Legislature. MEA-MFT will continue to fight these deceptive bills because:

- “Right-to-work” laws prohibit the most common type of union contracts and bargaining in Montana.
- “Right-to-work” laws weaken unions. These laws allow right-wing legislators to gut pensions for workers who contributed for years to their pension plans, leaving broken promises with no retirement security.
- “Right-to-work” laws are pushed by political extremists and greedy corporate CEOs in a power grab to get more money and leave workers with no protections, no job security, and no pensions.

### **What is “right-to-work”?**

“Right-to-work” laws make it optional for workers covered by a union contract to help pay for the expenses that the union incurs when it protects the rights of all employees. In other words, right-to-work lets some workers freeload off their dues-paying co-workers.

**“Right-to-work” laws offer no protection or economic benefits for workers.** In fact, studies show that these laws drive down wages, benefits, and overall living standards for everyone. And research reveals that right-to-work laws do not create jobs or improve a state’s business climate.

### **Wrong for workers**

**So-called “right-to-work” laws drive down wages for all workers, including non-union members, and women.** Workers living in “right-to-work” states earn about \$1,500 less per year than workers in states without these laws. The wage penalty is even higher for women and workers of color.

[www.epi.org/publication/bp299](http://www.epi.org/publication/bp299)

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## The Truth About “Right-to-Work” (continued)

**Right to work makes workplaces more dangerous.** According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 52.9 percent higher in right-to-work states.

[www.afcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/dotj\\_2010.pdf](http://www.afcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/dotj_2010.pdf)

## Wrong for businesses

**“Right-to-work” laws do not improve business conditions in states.**

[www.bepress.com/rle/vol5/iss1/art25](http://www.bepress.com/rle/vol5/iss1/art25)

**“Right-to-work” is not a deciding factor in where businesses locate.**

[www.areadevelopment.com/AnnualReports/jan2011/25th-annual-corporate-executive-survey48843.shtml](http://www.areadevelopment.com/AnnualReports/jan2011/25th-annual-corporate-executive-survey48843.shtml)

**High-tech companies that provide good-paying, American jobs favor states where unions have a strong presence,** because unions provide a highly skilled workforce and decrease turnover.

[www.itif.org/files/2010-state-new-economy-index.pdf](http://www.itif.org/files/2010-state-new-economy-index.pdf)

## Wrong for the economy

**Communities lose jobs when wages are lowered by “right-to-work.”** The Economic Policy Institute estimates that for every \$1 million in wage cuts, the local economy sheds six jobs.

[www.epi.org/publication/working-hard-indiana-bad-tortured-uphill](http://www.epi.org/publication/working-hard-indiana-bad-tortured-uphill)

**Right to work does not improve the employment rate.** In fact, eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment have “right-to-work” laws.

[www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm](http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm)

According to a report from Ohio University, **“right-to-work” laws actually led to a decrease in employment in certain industries.**

[http://econpapers.repec.org/article/sejancoec/v\\_3a73\\_3a2\\_3ay\\_3a2006\\_3ap\\_3a402-418.htm](http://econpapers.repec.org/article/sejancoec/v_3a73_3a2_3ay_3a2006_3ap_3a402-418.htm)

## Right-to-work proponents are wrong

“Right-to-work” supporters falsely claim that these laws protect workers who don’t want to join a union or disagree with a union’s politics. But **federal labor law already protects workers who don’t want to join a union or make political contributions.**

The true purpose of “right-to-work” laws is to hurt unions’ ability to advocate for all workers and to serve as a check on corporate greed.

*“In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and the freedom of collective bargaining by which unions have improved wages and working conditions of everyone.... Wherever these [right to work] laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights. We do not intend to let them do this to us. We demand this fraud be stopped. Our weapon is our vote.” —Martin Luther King, speaking against right-to-work laws in 1961*

