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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT



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Opinion Patriot New©

To compete with our neighbors, Pa. needs Right-to-Work | Opinion

November 1, 2017 By [Guest Editorial](#)
By Beth Anne Mumford

View article at: http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/11/to_compete_with_our_neighbors.html

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Suppose you care for an elderly parent or grandparent at home. Should you be compelled to pay dues to a health care workers' union? The idea may seem ridiculous, but Gov. Tom Wolf is trying hard to make it a reality.

He signed an [executive order](#) in 2015 creating a "direct care worker representative" for home care workers who receive state subsidies, a position promptly filled by a union-created group. He also

required that home caregivers attend meetings with another union-run group as part of a mandatory orientation program, although his lawyers now claim the requirement was a simple "[mistake](#)" and the governor has formally suspended the orientation program.

It's very likely that Wolf's bid to mandate unionization of home caregivers will be ruled illegal. The U.S. Supreme Court [previously ruled](#) that state-

subsidized caregivers in Illinois could not be compelled to join and pay a union because they were not state employees.

Whatever the courts decide, Pennsylvania lawmakers should pass right-to-work legislation, which ensures that employees are never required to join a union or pay union dues as a condition of employment. In doing so, Pennsylvania would join the [28 states](#) that already have right-to-work laws on the books - including our neighbor West Virginia, which adopted it just last year.

When a union has to earn its dues, rather than simply confiscate them, it is forced to prove its value to workers. So it should come as no surprise that from 2005 through 2015, union membership [grew in right-to-work states](#) but fell in non-right-to-work states. States with right-to-work laws have enjoyed stronger job growth. According to the [Heritage Foundation](#), jobs in right-to-work states grew by 46 percent between 1990 and 2014, compared to just 20 percent in forced-union states. Many companies won't even consider moving operations to a state without right-to-work.

"About 35-to-40 percent of manufacturing enterprises in the automotive industry insist on operating in a right-to-work state," estimates [David Brandon](#), president of The Pathfinders, a Dallas-based consulting firm. "Another 20-to-25 percent say it is a very important factor and will be used as a second or third-tier factor in site selection."

Pennsylvania has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation - only seven states are worse off -

and our lack of worker freedom is one likely culprit. A study by the [Competitive Enterprise Institute](#) found that right-to-work laws increased economic growth rates by 11.5 percentage points between 1977 and 2012. If state lawmakers won't act, then counties should consider passing right-to-work bills of their own. It wouldn't be the first time that counties have seized the initiative from state legislators.

Even before Kentucky passed right-to-work legislation earlier this year, 12 of the state's counties had already approved it on their own. These counties won an important legal battle last year when the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit [upheld local right-to-work laws](#). Counties fought to defend worker freedom because it brought proven economic benefits. Within six months of passing right-to-work laws, Kentucky's Warren County had received inquiries from 47 economic development projects representing at least [4,785 new jobs](#).

That's exactly the sort of economic bump that's needed in a place like Erie County, which has lost [almost 2,000 manufacturing jobs](#) over the last three years. Passing right-to-work legislation would send a clear signal to employers and workers that the county is open for business. Whether at the county or state level, right-to-work laws would do much to expand worker freedoms and job opportunities. The governor's ongoing efforts to force unionization on home care workers should remind us that the choice to join a union should be just that - a choice.



Americans for Prosperity, founded in 2004, is a conservative political advocacy group in the United States funded **by David H. Koch and Charles Koch**. As the **Koch brothers'** primary political advocacy group, it is one of the most influential American conservative organizations.

THIS GROUP DOESN'T GIVE A



ABOUT LABOR AND WORKING PEOPLE

THIS OPINION DATED NOVEMBER 1, 2017 DEMONSTRATES THAT THESE ANTI-UNION GROUPS ARE ALIVE AND WELL IN PA AND WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH THEIR ANTI-UNION AGENDA - THEY ARE STIRRING THE POT AGAIN AND WE NEED TO WATCH THIS CLOSELY



'Paycheck Protection?' Who, exactly, are we protecting here?: Editorial

By PennLive Editorial Board originally posted on February 1, 2017 penned@pennlive.com

View article at: http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/02/paycheck_protection_who_exactl.html

"Paycheck protection." It sounds so friendly and benign: the government helping workers hang onto their hard-earned dollars. But protection for whom and from what? Ask those questions and the continuing push by some legislators to stop automatic deductions of dues from the paychecks of the state's unionized employees stops looking altruistic and starts looking self-serving.

The bill that passed out of the State Government Committee on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 sought to prohibit unions from using [automatically deducted dues and contributions](#) for any political purpose, including get-out-the-vote efforts, lobbying or voter registration drives. But the ultimate goal in past "paycheck protection" drives has been to halt the automatic deduction entirely, ostensibly because it costs taxpayers money. Let's look at that specious argument first, because it is the most transparent. Lots of things are automatically deducted from our paychecks - Social Security and Medicare, taxes, insurance, charities such as United Way. Some employers will even divert some of your paycheck - automatically - into personal savings accounts, and don't forget your 401(k), if you have one. This is done by computer, not by some clerk laboring over a ledger with a quill, like Bob Cratchit of yore.

When the state Legislature most recently tried to do away with the union deduction, Lt. Gov. Mike Stack noted that the deduction cost, in **total, is less than \$100 a year** to implement. If the state were so concerned about the cost to taxpayers, it could tack a penny onto every union worker's check, cover the \$100 and make a little profit. At least the new bill is honest. Its supporters want to undermine public unions. Their excuse is the minority of state employees who work in union shops and don't want to pay dues, for either financial or philosophical reasons.

Examined as a freedom-of-speech issue, we get it. It's the same issue that, in the business world, overshadows the Citizens United decision that allows corporations to make political donations without the consent of all their shareholders. No one should be forced to support political causes or policies they disagree with. But that is what the ballot box is for. We saw this in the strongest terms in the recent presidential election: If you don't like what your leaders are doing, speak out and step up. In the case of a corporation, shareholders can vote out the board. In a union, members who don't like what their leadership is doing - including automatically deducting dues for whatever purpose - should get involved. Don't go running to government to impose your views on everyone else. Run for office. Vote. Make deductions an issue to be negotiated in the next contract.

(It's ironic that this bill emerged from the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 and proposed dropping mandatory sick days and other types of leave for teachers from state law, arguing that it would be better if these provisions were negotiated into union contracts, not legislated. But no one ever said government was consistent.) We all know why Republicans want "paycheck protection" and have couched the issue in Orwellian terms: Unions tend to strongly support their opponents. **But this is not needed legislation. And as many taxpaying voters in the commonwealth have asked this week, don't legislators have more important things to do right now** - such as property tax reform, pension reform and getting the state budget under control?