



# Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

## Strength in Numbers 95,000

William Hamilton, President & Eastern PA Legislative Coordinator – Joseph Molinero, Sec.-Treasurer & Western PA Legislative Coordinator – Tim O'Neill, Consultant – Dan Grace, Trustee & Legislative Advisor – Robert Baptiste, Esq. Legal Advisor

# LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

## “RIGHT-TO-WORK”

The following information has been provided to the PA Conference of Teamsters by Brother Ed Baptiste, IBT Department of Political and Legislative Action

### Deceptive ‘Right to Work’ is Wrong for Workers

“Right to work” legislation is being promoted by corporate special interest groups and big multinational corporations that ship jobs overseas and offshore their profits to avoid paying taxes. This deceptive legislation weakens collective bargaining rights, which would tilt the balance in our state even more toward big corporations and further rig the system at the expense of middle-class families.

- **Right to work legislation puts our families’ safety at risk.** It would make it harder for nurses to negotiate for safe staffing levels, and limit the ability of emergency responders, police officers and firefighters to negotiate for things to keep us all safe—like faster response times and lifesaving emergency equipment. This legislation limits the rights of our state’s everyday heroes, silences the professional voices of teachers, nurses, police officers and firefighters, and makes it harder for them to protect and serve.
- **These laws endanger safety and health standards that protect workers on the job.** Unions have a long history of fighting for tougher workplace safety and health rules. By weakening unions, right to work laws weaken workers’ ability through their unions to maintain and strengthen workplace safety and health standards. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 49% higher in states with these laws.<sup>1</sup>
- **Right to work laws lower wages for everyone.** The average worker in states with these laws makes \$6,109 a year less than workers in other states (\$44,401, compared with \$50,511).<sup>2</sup> Because of the higher wages, working families in states without these laws also benefit from healthier tax bases that improve their quality of life.
- **Right to work legislation is unnecessary.** Under federal law, no one can be forced to join a union. And the Supreme Court ruled long ago that union-represented workers can never be forced to pay dues for union political activities they disagree with.
- **Right to work legislation would allow the government to interfere unfairly in the freedoms of private businesses and employees.** This proposed legislation would weaken our right to collectively bargain, limiting our freedom to bargain for respect, fair pay and safety on the job.





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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2014, [www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm)

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages–QCEW, 2014 data, (all industries, all establishments, average annual pay). Numbers are rounded (\$50,510.58 and \$44,401.17).

- **These laws are unfair to dues-paying union members.** For example, they require a union to spend its time and money representing a nonmember who pays no dues—even if the battle is long and costly. Since the union represents everyone, everyone benefits—so everyone should share in the costs. Amazingly, nonmembers who don't pay dues can sue the union if they think it has not represented them well enough.

- **Right to work legislation is the wrong priority for our state right now.** Our state legislature should focus on strengthening our economy and making sure it works for all state residents. We need to create more good jobs. We need to stop giving tax dollars to companies that ship work overseas. We need to close unfair corporate tax loopholes and stop employer fraud that deprives workers of rights and allows corporations to cheat on their taxes. But none of that will happen if corporate special interests pass this extreme bill—because it tilts the balance of power even more toward big corporations, at the expense of middle-class families.

## Deceptive 'Right to Work' Laws Hurt Everyone

By many measures, the quality of life is worse in states with “right to work” laws. Wages are lower, poverty levels are higher, people are less likely to have health insurance, and resources for education are lower—even infant mortality and the likelihood of being killed on the job are higher. **States with right to work laws:**

### Have Lower Wages and Incomes

- On average, workers in states with right to work laws make \$6,109 (12.1%) less annually than workers in other states (\$44,401, compared with \$50,511).<sup>1</sup>
- Median household income in states with these laws is \$8,174 (13.9%) less than in other states (\$50,712 vs. \$58,886).<sup>2</sup>
- 29.6% of jobs in right to work states were in low-wage occupations, compared with 22.8% of jobs in other states.<sup>3</sup>

### Have Lower Rates of Health Insurance Coverage

- People younger than 65 in states with right to work laws are more likely to be uninsured (13.0%, compared with 9.4% in free-bargaining states).<sup>4</sup>
- Only 47% of private-sector employers in states with right to work laws offer insurance coverage to their employees, compared with 52.2% in other states.<sup>5</sup> That difference is even more pronounced among small employers (with fewer than 50 workers)—only 30.1% offer workers health insurance, compared with 38.1% of small employers in other states.<sup>6</sup>





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1 Bureau of Labor Statistics, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (all industries, all establishments, average annual pay), 2014 data. Numbers are rounded (\$50,510.58 and \$44,401.17).

2 U.S. Census Bureau, Table H-8. Median Household Income by State: 1984 to 2014, <http://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/tables/time-series/historical-income-households/h08.xls>

3 CFED, Asset and Opportunity Scorecard, Low Wage Jobs, 2013, <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/low-wage-jobs>

4 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Insurance Coverage of Nonelderly 0–64, 2014, <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/nonelderly-0-64/#>

5 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Percent of Private Sector Establishments that Offer Health Insurance to their Employees, 2013, <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/percent-of-firms-offering-coverage/>

6 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Percent of Private Sector Establishments That Offer Health Insurance to their Employees, by firm size, 2013, <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/firms-offeringcoverage-by-size/#>

- Workers in right to work states also pay a larger share of their health insurance premiums, on average, than those in free-bargaining states (28.5% of the premium, compared with 25.4% in free-bargaining states).<sup>7</sup>

### Have Higher Poverty and Infant Mortality Rates

- Poverty rates are higher in states with right to work laws (15.3% overall and 21.4% for children), compared with poverty rates of 12.8% overall and 18.0% for children in states without these laws.<sup>8</sup>

- The infant mortality rate is 12.4% higher in states with right to work laws.<sup>9</sup>

### Invest Less in Education

- States with right to work laws spend 32.5% less per pupil on elementary and secondary education than other states.<sup>10</sup>

### Have Higher Workplace Fatality Rates

- The rate of workplace deaths is 49% higher in states with these laws, according to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.<sup>11</sup>

1 CFED, Employee Share of the Premium, 2014, <http://scorecard.assetsandopportunity.org/latest/measure/employee-share-of-premium>

8 U.S. Census Bureau, POV46: Poverty Status by State: 2014 below 100% and 50% of Poverty — All Ages,

[www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032015/pov/pov46\\_weight\\_10050\\_1.xls](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032015/pov/pov46_weight_10050_1.xls)

U.S. Census Bureau, POV46: Poverty Status by State. 2014 Below 100% and 50% of Poverty — People Under 18 Years of Age, Weighted Person Count,

[www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032015/pov/pov46\\_weight\\_10050\\_3.xls](http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/cpstables/032015/pov/pov46_weight_10050_3.xls)

9 Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, Infant Mortality Rates (deaths per 1,000 live births), 2013, <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/infant-death-rate/#>

10 National Education Association, Ranking & Estimates - Rankings of the States 2015 and Estimates of School Statistics 2016, Table H-11. Current Expenditures for Public K-12 Schools Per Student in Fall Enrollment, 2014-15 (\$), [www.nea.org/assets/docs/2016\\_NEA\\_Rankings\\_And\\_Estimates.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/2016_NEA_Rankings_And_Estimates.pdf)

Note: Wisconsin was excluded from the free-bargaining states vs. right to work state analysis for education spending because the state enacted its' right to work law in 2015. The impact of right to work policies would not have been fully experienced in the 2014–2015 school year. In addition, West Virginia is included as a free bargaining state in this analysis of 2014–2015 school year data because the state passed right to work legislation in 2016. 11 Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2014, [www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm)

# How to Talk About 'Right to Work'

## Message Do's and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
Be critical of corporate CEOs who abuse workers and put profits above people.	Be critical of employers or businesses that create jobs.
Simplify opposition to "right to work" using a clear narrative with simple statistics as support.	Overload on facts and stats, complicate our message or use overly partisan rhetoric.
Be positive and relaxed.	Be angry or confrontational.
Raise the consequences of ending unions. People see unions' main roles as standing up for workers, protecting their working conditions, seeking workplace safety measures and holding CEOs accountable. Ask what would happen if there were no unions.	Defend unions or sell unions as the answer to everything.
Use personal stories to illustrate points.	Use labor lingo or insider language.
Use messengers from helping professions (e.g., nurses, firefighters, teachers, paramedics, etc.), nonunion workers and small businesses.	Use labor leaders and union presidents as messengers.
Engage people in real discussions using our message: Discredit the opposition, personalize the impact of right to work and redirect to real alternatives for helping the middle class.	Attempt to "sound bite" organize using catch phrases that repeat the other side's message, like describing right to work as right to work for less.
Talk about the impact on the middle class and our audience. Emphasize their struggles and how right to work makes life harder for everyone.	Focus primarily on the effect on unions (e.g., the free rider argument is not effective with nonunion audiences).