



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

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LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

Congressman Sherman, Senator Elizabeth Warren to Introduce Legislation to End So-Called, 'Right-to-Work' Laws Nationwide

September 20, 2017
Press Release

Washington, D.C. – Today, Congressman Brad Sherman (D-Sherman Oaks) announced his intention, along with Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts), to introduce legislation to eliminate so-called 'right-to-work' laws.

Sherman has introduced this legislation in the past five Congresses. In the 114th Congress, Sherman introduced the bill in July 2016 with 48 House cosponsors. Sherman consistently earns a 100 percent rating from the AFL-CIO.

"We now have 28 states with 'right-to-work' provisions," **said Sherman**. "Their stated goal is to take jobs from other states by weakening unions and, therefore, lowering wages. Only by ending so-called 'right-to-work' nationwide can we stop this race to the bottom."

Sherman continued, "Current 'right-to-work' laws require unions to represent non-dues-paying employees, thereby creating free riders – people who benefit from the union contract but don't pay. Due to this free-rider problem, it is rare that a strong union can be organized in a 'right-to-work' state. In addition, 'right-to-work' laws create different standards for union membership in different states. This results not only in confusion over the regulation of union membership but also places a higher cost on worker representation in labor rights states."

"The country is in the middle of renegotiating NAFTA, which was a bad deal for American workers," **said Senator Elizabeth Warren**. "If we want to protect workers and expect a level playing field in international trade deals, we need to start at home - and that means banning states from imposing restrictions that prevent workers from joining together to fight for their future."

'Right-to-work' laws have come to be known as 'right-to-work-for-less laws.' A study released by Sherman in July

2016, shows that wages in 'right-to-work' states average \$6,807 a year less than workers in labor-rights states.

"So-called 'right-to-work' laws strip unions of their legal ability to collect dues when the employee benefits from a union-negotiated collective bargaining agreement. This forces unions to use their time and dues

from their members to provide benefits to free riders who are exempt from paying their fair share,"

Sherman said. "These laws are harmful to labor-rights states, like California, which allow labor unions to organize because now we have to compete with the race to the bottom. As a result, California companies have to compete with states where the workers would like better wages, working conditions, and benefits but are unable to organize to get them."

"With the introduction of legislation banning so-called 'right-to-work' laws, Congressman Sherman and Senator Warren have once again demonstrated their strong commitment to working families," **said Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO**. "'Right-to-work' laws undermine the economy and weaken worker's ability to bargain for better working conditions, which translates into lower pay and fewer benefits for everyone."

In 1947, Section 14(b) of the Taft Hartley Act (an Act that passed by overriding President Truman's veto) allowed states to pass legislation that eliminates the ability of unions to collect dues from those who benefit from union contracts. The result encourages a race to the bottom, as states compete to attract employers by offering weak labor laws and, as a result, lower wages. Sherman's legislation would repeal Section 14(b) of the Taft Hartley Act.

115TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION S. _____

To repeal the authority under the National Labor Relations Act for States to enact laws prohibiting agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. WARREN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on September 19, 2017

A BILL

To repeal the authority under the National Labor Relations Act for States to enact laws prohibiting agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment, and for other purposes.

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1. *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
2. *SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.*
3. *This Act may be cited as the ‘‘Protecting Workers and Improving Labor Standards Act’’.*
4. *SEC. 2. PREEMPTING STATE RIGHT-TO-WORK LAWS.*
5. *Subsection (b) of section 14 of the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 164) is repealed.*

U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren also introduced S.1838

115TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION S.1838

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U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren introduced [S.1838](#) — 115th Congress (2017-2018) a bill to repeal the authority under the National Labor Relations Act for States to enact laws prohibiting agreements requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment, and for other purposes. This senate bill was introduced on September 19, 2017.
