

Dear Senator/Representative:

We respectfully urge you to join us in opposing “right-to-work” legislation. Right-to-work is complicated, confusing and controversial legislation that is bad for workers and bad for the middle class.

The message of the 2016 Election was clear. The middle class and working families want their voices heard by the political establishment in Washington. Unfortunately, the introduction of so-called “right-to-work” legislation proves some in Washington still haven’t gotten the message.

Right-to-work legislation is an attempt by wealthy CEOs and corporate special interests to tip the economic balance even more in their favor at the expense of the middle class. This legislation little more than a power grab by the same billionaire special interests who outsource middle class jobs overseas and offshore their profits to avoid paying taxes.

The destructive anti-worker bill introduced by Reps. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) and Steve King (R-Iowa) last week would amend the National Labor Relations Act and Railway Labor Act, and in the process devastate workers and their unions. Pushed by the American Legislative Exchange Council and wealthy billionaires, the painful consequences for workers and the middle class can be seen in the state level differences in middle-class economic in right-to-work states compared to free bargaining states.

Lower wages are foremost among the harms this legislation creates. The Economic Policy Institute noted, wages are 3.1 percent lower in RTW states for both union and non-union workers, even after calculating differences in cost of living, demographics and the local labor market. That would become the reality nationwide as workers would now have less bargaining power.

Healthcare insurance coverage is lower and costs are higher in right-to-work states. People under the age of 65 in states with right-to-work laws are more likely to be uninsured. (13.0%, compared with 9.4% in free-bargaining states). 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. That difference is even more pronounced among employers with fewer than 50 workers: only 30.1% offer health insurance compared with 38.1% of small employers in other states. 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). Finally, and most morbidly, workplace deaths are a staggering 49% more frequent in right-to-work states.

Right-to-work as an economic development strategy is a race to the bottom. Contradicting claims by proponents that right-to-work creates jobs, 6 of the 10 states with the highest unemployment rates are right-to-work states. Similarly, 9 of the 10 states with the highest rates of poverty have passed right-to-work legislation (7 of the states passed right-to-work laws more than four decades ago). In these states, right-to-work hasn’t created jobs and prosperity, instead this law has perpetuated chronic unemployment and long-term poverty.

This legislation does nothing to create jobs, grow the middle class or improve the lives of working families. It's shameful that some members of Congress have chosen to once again prioritize big business interests over the loud and clear voices of the American middle class.

The American people are looking for laws that will secure the American Dream for working families and the middle class. Right-to-work is a misguided and dangerous economic development scheme that does not meet this simple standard, and it does not deserve your support.

Sincerely,