

Right to Work for Less

To set the record (and the name) straight, right to work for less doesn't guarantee any rights. In fact, by weakening unions and collective bargaining, it destroys the best job security protection that exists: the union contract. Meanwhile, it allows workers to pay nothing and get all the benefits of union membership. Right to work laws say unions must represent all eligible employees, whether they pay dues or not. This forces unions to use their time and members' dues money to provide union benefits to free riders who are not willing to pay their fair share.

Right to work laws lower wages for everyone. The average worker in a right to work state makes about \$5,333 a year less than workers in other states (\$35,500 compared with \$30,167).[1] Weekly wages are \$72 greater in free-bargaining states than in right to work states (\$621 versus \$549).[2] Working families in states without right to work laws have higher wages and benefit from healthier tax bases that improve their quality of life.

Federal law already protects workers who don't want to join a union to get or keep their jobs. Supporters claim right to work laws protect employees from being forced to join unions. Don't be fooled—federal law already does this, as well as protecting nonmembers from paying for union activities that violate their religious or political beliefs. This individual freedom argument is a sham.

Right to work endangers safety and health standards that protect workers on the job by weakening unions that help to ensure worker safety by fighting for tougher safety rules. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 51 percent higher in states with right to work, where unions can't speak up on behalf of workers.[3]

Right to work laws just aren't fair to dues-paying members. If a nonunion worker is fired illegally, the union must use its time and money to defend him or her, even if that requires going through a costly legal process. Everyone benefits, so all should share in the process. Nonmembers can even sue the union if they think it has not represented them well enough.
