

Stop Right-to-Work in Michigan!

This September, every union member should take a minute to reflect on the value of having a union in their workplace. The union advantage improves the quality of life for members and society in general. Unfortunately, we are all so used to the advantages we have that we take them for granted. Advantages like the 40-hour work week, the fact that we have weekends and lunch breaks, workers' compensation if we are injured and unemployment insurance if we are laid off. It's easy to take such things for granted, but someone fought for these advantages and that someone was more often than not a union member.

Unions have raised the standard of living for us here in Michigan through better wages, affordable health benefits, pensions, and work place safety standards. But now, we are witnessing an organized attack on unions. This spring, "Right to Work" bills were introduced in the State House and Senate. Out of state groups are threatening to put right to work on Michigan's 2008 ballot. These efforts are meant to break and bankrupt unions by forcing unions to use their resources and members' dues to represent workers who refuse to pay dues.

"Right to Work" laws impose an unfair burden on union members who want to join the union and pay their fair share. These laws are intended to suppress union membership, drag the union down from "free riders" and weaken the union's ability to provide aggressive representation for workers. It's no wonder unscrupulous employers would love to pass "Right to Work" in Michigan.

But, what's in it for workers? The quality of life for workers in "Right to Work" states is a sorry record"

- Workers in "Right to Work" states earn \$5900 a year less;
- The percentage of families without health insurance is 20% higher in "Right to Work" states;
- The maximum weekly workers' compensation benefit is 25% less in "Right to Work" states;
- In 2000, the infant mortality rate in "Right to Work" states was 17% higher;
- A 2006 AFL-CIO health and safety study cited the rate of workplace fatalities as 41% higher in "Right to Work" states.

Michigan has seen tough economic times, but there is no evidence that "Right to Work" is the solution we seek. There is an abundance of evidence that "Right to Work" would leave our State with a greatly diminished quality of life that would drive away good employers and the young workers who are the future of this great state.

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