



# RIGHT TO WORK IS WRONG FOR EVERYONE

## False Claims, False Promises: Why “Right to Work” Is Wrong for Everyone

Across the country, workers are facing a barrage of legislative attacks on their rights to form unions and bargain collectively, including so-called right-to-work legislation. Right-to-work laws make it optional for workers covered by a union contract to help pay for the expenses that the union incurs while protecting the rights of all employees. Contrary to claims from its supporters, right to work offers no protection or economic benefits for workers. In fact, studies show that these deceptively titled laws drive down wages, benefits, and overall living standards for everyone. And research reveals that right-to-work laws do not create jobs or improve a state’s business climate.

Read on to learn why right to work is wrong for workers, businesses, and our economy.

### Wrong for workers

**These laws drive down wages for all workers, including non-union members, women, and people of color.** Workers living in right-to-work states earn about \$1,500 less per year than workers in states without these laws. The wage penalty is even higher for women and workers of color.

[www.epi.org/publication/bp299](http://www.epi.org/publication/bp299)

**Workers in right-to-work states are less likely to have health insurance.** The rate of employer-sponsored health insurance for workers in right-to-work states is 2.6 percentage points lower than in states without these restrictions.

[www.epi.org/publication/bp299](http://www.epi.org/publication/bp299)

**Right to work makes workplaces more dangerous.** According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 52.9 percent higher in right-to-work states.

[www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/dotj\\_2010.pdf](http://www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/memorial/upload/dotj_2010.pdf)

### Wrong for businesses

**Right-to-work laws do not improve business conditions in states.**

[www.bepress.com/rle/vol5/iss1/art25](http://www.bepress.com/rle/vol5/iss1/art25)

**Right to work is not a deciding factor in where businesses locate.**

[www.areadevelopment.com/AnnualReports/jan2011/25th-annual-corporate-executive-survey48843.shtml](http://www.areadevelopment.com/AnnualReports/jan2011/25th-annual-corporate-executive-survey48843.shtml)

**High-tech companies that provide good-paying, American jobs favor states where unions have a strong presence,** because unions provide a highly skilled workforce and decrease turnover.

[www.itif.org/files/2010-state-new-economy-index.pdf](http://www.itif.org/files/2010-state-new-economy-index.pdf)

### Wrong for the economy

**Communities lose jobs when wages are lowered by right to work.**

The Economic Policy Institute estimates that for every \$1 million in wage cuts, the local economy sheds six jobs.

[www.epi.org/publication/working-hard-indiana-bad-tortured-uphill](http://www.epi.org/publication/working-hard-indiana-bad-tortured-uphill)

**Right to work does not improve the employment rate.** In fact, eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment have right-to-work laws.

[www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm](http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm)

According to a report from Ohio University, **these laws actually led to a decrease in employment in certain industries.**

[econpapers.repec.org/article/sejancoec/v\\_3a73\\_3a2\\_3ay\\_3a2006\\_3ap\\_3a402-418.htm](http://econpapers.repec.org/article/sejancoec/v_3a73_3a2_3ay_3a2006_3ap_3a402-418.htm)

### Right-to-work proponents are wrong

Right-to-work supporters falsely claim that right to work protects workers who don’t want to join a union or disagree with a union’s politics. **But federal labor law already protects workers who don’t want to join a union or make political contributions.**

Right to work’s true purpose is to hurt the ability of unions to advocate for all workers and serve as a check on corporate greed.

Learn more about right to work and get involved at [www.wrongforeveryone.com](http://www.wrongforeveryone.com).

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# Right to Work for Less

## Right to Work Hurts Everyone

Workers in states with right to work laws have a consistently lower quality of life than in other states—lower wages, higher poverty and infant mortality rates, less access to the health care they need and poorer education for their children.

### **Lower Wages**

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).<sup>1</sup> Weekly wages are \$72 greater in free-bargaining states than in right to work states (\$621 versus \$549).<sup>2</sup>

### **Fewer People with Health Care**

21 percent more people lack health insurance in right to work states compared to free-bargaining states.<sup>3</sup>

### **Higher Poverty and Infant Mortality Rates**

Right to work states have a poverty rate of 12.5 percent, compared with 10.2 percent in other states.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the infant mortality rate is 16 percent higher in right to work states.<sup>5</sup>

### **Lower Workers' Compensation Benefits for Workers Injured on the Job**

Maximum weekly worker compensation benefits are \$30 higher in free states (\$609 versus \$579 in right to work states).<sup>6</sup>

### **More Workplace Deaths and Injuries**

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.<sup>7</sup>

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1 Average Annual Pay, 2001 from Bureau of Labor Statistics, State average annual pay for 2000 and 2001 and percent change in pay for all covered workers. URL: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/annpay.t01.htm>.

2 Bureau of Labor Statistics.

3 Percent of population lacking health insurance from Current Population Survey, March 2002. Table HI06. Health Insurance coverage status by state for all people: 2001.

4 Poverty Rate in 2001 from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2002. URL: [http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032002/pov/new25\\_001.htm](http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032002/pov/new25_001.htm).

5 O'Leary Morgan, Kathleen, and Scott Morgan, State Rankings 2001. Morgan Quitno Press, 2001.

6 Workers' Compensation data from the AFL-CIO Department of Safety and Health.

7 Workplace Fatalities from *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*. AFL-CIO. April, 2002.