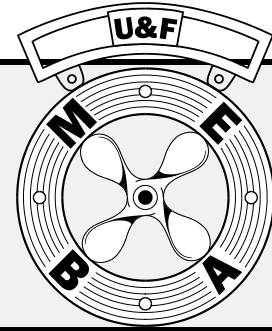


LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2017



Two House Republicans are pushing ahead with designs to bleed labor unions with their introduction of new federal “right-to-work” legislation. Reps. Steve King (IA) and Joe Wilson (SC) introduced H.R. 785 in early February and repeated the fallacy that workers flourish under right-to-work laws and that it serves as a boon for job creation and economic growth.

As summarized by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO, a “right-to-work” law stops employers and employees from negotiating a type of agreement—known as a union security clause—that requires all workers who receive the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement to pay their share of the costs of representing them. These laws say unions must represent every eligible employee, whether or not he or she pays dues. In other words, “right to work” laws allow workers to pay nothing and still get all the benefits of union membership. With GOP control across the board, the legislation has the ability to become the law of the land.

But AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka pointed out that “Right-to-Work” is a lie dressed up in a feel-good slogan. It doesn’t give workers freedom—instead, it weakens our right to join together and bargain for better wages and working conditions. Its end goal is to destroy unions.

Numbers don’t lie. Workers in states with right to work laws have wages that are 12% lower. That’s because unions raise wages for all workers, not just our members.”

He noted that a recent Pew survey shows that 60% of Americans—an overwhelming majority—support unions. “Americans clearly see the value of coming together with their co-workers to tackle inequality. Right to work isn’t the will of the people, it’s legislation pushed on working people by out-of-touch corporations that want to ship jobs overseas, cut health and safety protections, and pay lower wages. This is an attempt by corporate CEOs to further tip the scale even more in their favor, at working people’s expense.”

“Working people were loud and clear in this past election. We want an economy that works for all, not just corporations. We know we need to rewrite the rules of the economy so that policies like bad trade deals and right to work aren’t the new norm. President Trump has said he supports unions and the people who are our members. He has stood up to corporate Republicans on trade. We call on him to do the same on right to work, and to stand up for every worker’s right to join a union.”