Policy Department

Adopt Right-to-Work Laws

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ADVANCING AMERICAN FREEDOM

TOPLINE: Congress and states should pass Right-to-Work laws, which prevent workers from being fired from their jobs for refusing to pay dues or fees to a labor union. This would force union officials to seek voluntary worker support and make it harder for them to make counterproductive contract demands.

BACKGROUND: Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act gives workers the "right to refrain" from all union activities "except to the extent that such right may be affected by an agreement requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment…" A National Right-to-Work law would remove the above exception from the NLRA, leaving workers with an unqualified right to refrain from participating in union activity. State Right-to-Work laws prevent employers from making union membership and dues payments a condition of employment. To date, 26 states have passed Right-to-Work laws.

Action Items (States, Congress):

- **The 24 states that don't yet have them should pass Right-to-Work laws**, or risk losing business to their neighbors.
- **Congress should extend Right-to-Work protections to workers in all 50 states**.

How It Would Make Life More Affordable:

- Unions that must earn voluntary financial support from workers are less likely to negotiate contracts that reward seniority over performance.
  - Businesses run more efficiently when the most talented workers can be rewarded, union approval isn't needed to improve operations, and union-ordered strikes and walkouts aren't a constant threat.
- Fewer contracts would force employers to pay workers to perform unnecessary tasks while prohibiting the use of labor-saving automation.
- In Right-to-Work states, cost-of-living-adjusted per capita disposable incomes are $3,495 higher than in forced unionism states.
- Since 2015, private sector payroll employment has grown nearly twice as fast in Right-to-Work states.
- Right-to-Work states experienced a net gain of residents aged 35-54 from 2014-2024 while forced unionism states experienced a net *loss* of residents within that prime working age bracket.
  - Americans prefer to live, work, and start businesses in states where they are less likely to be subject to union activism and dues demands.
- Right-to-Work brings economic growth, higher wages, and lower prices.

Related Legislation: The National Right-to-Work Act (S. 533, H.R. 1232).

BOTTOMLINE: Taking away union bosses' power to force workers to pay union dues would make them more accountable to workers and improve economic outcomes.