

Right to Work States Are Really Restricted Rights States

'Right to Work':

It's not a right to a job – it's a free ride

“Right to work” has nothing to do with a right to a job or employment. The deceptively named “right to work” laws ban workers – who by a majority vote decided to form a union in their workplace – and employers from negotiating union security clauses. By law, unions must represent all workers – members and nonmembers – in contract negotiations and other workplace issues.

A union security clause does not force workers to join a union but simply means they must pay a fair share for the economic benefits they receive because of union representation – such as health insurance, pensions and wages that are on average better than those for nonunion workers.

A “right to work” law would allow nonmember workers to get all the benefits of union membership and pay nothing, while forcing unions and their members to foot the bill for those not willing to pay their share. The result is weaker unions with inadequate resources to represent members.

In the 28 non-“right-to-work” states, federal law protects those workers who do not want to join the union. Workers in those states are required to pay only a fair share to cover the costs of their union representation, but not the cost of a union’s political, legislative, social or charitable activities.

It's really a 'right to work for less'

It's no coincidence that some employer groups, Big Business and ultra-conservative lawmakers back “right to work” laws because such laws weaken unions and in turn depress wages. Studies show that workers in “right to work” states earn

significantly less, while workers in non-“right-to-work” states earn significantly more.. A primary reason is that workers with a union contract earn higher pay – weakening unions lowers average pay. Workers of color and women workers who are union members make significantly higher wages.

- The average worker in a “right to work state earns about \$5,333 less a year than workers in other states. (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001)

- Hispanic union members earn 45 percent (\$180) more a week than non-union Hispanic workers. (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jan. 2002)

- African Americans earn 30 percent (\$140) more a week if they are union members. (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jan. 2002)

- Union women earn 30 percent more (\$149) a week than nonunion women. (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Jan. 2002)

It's not just about unions, But communities too

“Right to work” laws reach far beyond wages. Quality-of-life issues such as health care, education, worker safety and poverty suffer greatly in “right to work” states.

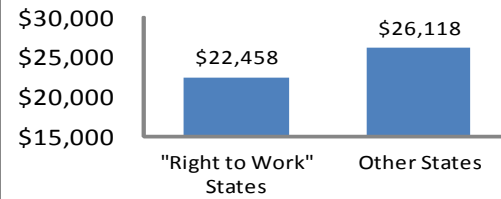
- In “right to work” states 21 percent more people are without health insurance compared with those in free-bargaining states. (source: *State Rankings 2000, A Statistical View of the 50 United States*, Morgan Quinto Press)

- “Right to work” states spend \$1,699 less per elementary and secondary pupil than other states. (source: Education Vital Signs, 2000-2001 school year)

- The infant mortality rate in “right to work” states is 17 percent higher than in other states, and the poverty rate is 12.5 percent compared with 10.2 percent in other states. (source: *State Rankings 2000, A Statistical View of the 50 United States*, Morgan Quinto Press; U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2002)

- The rate of workplace death is 51 percent higher in “right to work” states. (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001, AFL-CIO, “Death on the Job,” April 2002)

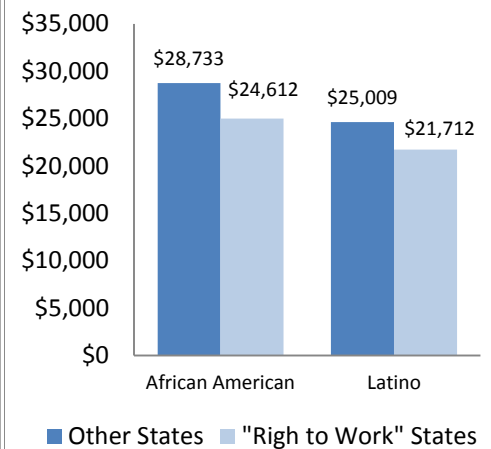
Wages are Lower in 'Right to Work' States



Source: *State Rankings 1998: A Statistical View of the 50 United States*, Morgan Quinto Press

People of Color Earn Less in 'Right to Work' States

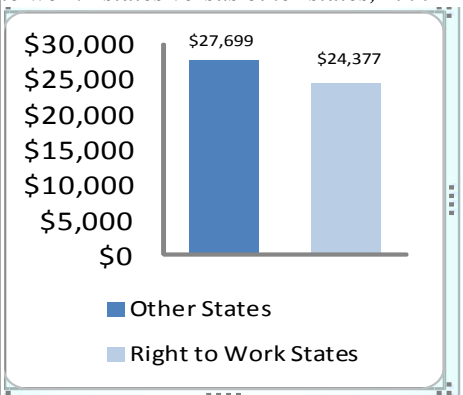
Median annual earnings of African American and Latino Workers in “right to work” states versus other states, 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, *Profile of Selected Economic Statistics*

Women Earn Less in 'Right to Work' States

Median annual earnings of women in “right to work” states versus other states, 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, *Profile of Selected Economic Statistics*