

Right to Work is Wrong – Let's Outlaw It

A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT JAMES P. HOFFA



A Republican-controlled Congress has taken aim at workers' rights in 2017, including the ability to collectively bargain. But now a group of lawmakers have said "Enough!"

Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.) are the lead sponsors of legislation introduced in late September that would outlaw right-to-work (RTW) laws in the U.S. It is a fitting push back on efforts to curtail the ability of workers in this country to organize and stand united against their employers.

As of now, 28 states have passed RTW laws. While supporters claim that the law promotes job growth, history shows otherwise. The policy is a ruse that only causes a race to the bottom for wages.

RTW states have a higher poverty rate than states with union rights. In fact, nine of the 10 highest poverty states are RTW. That, in part, is attributable to lower salaries and benefits. Those with no rights at work make almost \$1,500 a year less. They are also less likely to receive employer-based health insurance or retirement benefits.

That's why it makes sense for elected officials to push back on these lousy laws. They strip unions of the ability to collect dues from all workers who benefit from union-negotiated contracts. Unions are forced to use their time and money to provide benefits to free riders who won't pay their fair share.

Canada is now fighting to have language barring RTW laws placed in an updated version of NAFTA. That's a good thing. Lawmakers must take a fresh look at these measures.



Teamsters Public Services News

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In the United States today, a public employee is over five times more likely to belong to a union than someone in the private sector. It should be no surprise that those who look to extinguish the American labor movement have their sights on dismantling the protections enjoyed by our Teamster brothers and sisters in the public sector.

These efforts may take the form of privatizing public services and turning them over to corporate interests, limiting what employees are allowed to negotiate over or even eliminating the right to collectively bargain altogether.

The upcoming Supreme Court case Janus v. AFSCME represents another threat to public servants. For 40 years, it has been the law in many states for non-member public employees to pay a partial fee, called a "fair share" fee, for union representation if they receive the benefits of a collective bargaining agreement. Like union dues, these fees are not used for any political donations, but rather help pay for the negotiation and enforcement of the contract and allow the union to represent all bargaining unit employees.

In order to address a decision by the Supreme Court

that may outlaw fair share fees, the Public Services Division developed a national strategy called the "Power-Building Plan." The plan seeks to engage all bargaining unit employees to increase awareness of the benefits of union membership and convert all fair-share payers into full members.

"Now is the time that each member must make a commitment to speak with each non-member. Talk about the value of being a Teamster and how, by actively participating in the union, we can improve the chances of a promising future," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters General President.

The pitfalls of Right to Work and the possible impact of the Janus case were recently discussed on the Rick Smith Labor Radio Show broadcast.

TO WATCH, GO TO:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE2ckupzjUE&feature=youtu.be

JOINING TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE MIDDLE CLASS

In January 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court opened the political floodgates by allowing corporations and the wealthiest individuals

to spend unlimited amounts of money attempting to influence elections. In the years that have followed the Citizens United case, lawyers and lobbyists have been funded to dismantle public sector unions by changing laws and filing legal actions to litigate change. The reason: union density has grown five times greater in the private sector; therefore, the agenda of the richest 1 percent is to silence the voice of public employees by taking away the effectiveness of their unions.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Supreme Court is about to take another significant step to return the country to the robber baron days with the case of Janus v. AFSCME, which will determine whether public employee non-members can enjoy all of the rights and benefits negotiated in the contract free of charge!

The campaign against working people and their unions is a serious assault on the middle class. The bridge from poverty to prosperity was not built by wealthy elites, but by working people who created it through coming together in union, demanding a fair return on their work and negotiating written contracts defining the terms of their wages, health and retirement benefits, and fair working conditions.

Now is the time that all public employees and their families must mobilize and bring non-members into the fold. The question "Which side are you on?" must be part of the important national conversation we need to have.

If you want to protect the middle class and safeguard the progress that has been achieved through the union movement, we must ensure that every man and woman who serves the public is a fully involved union member.



Red Cross Workers VOTE TEAMSTERS

Over the past several months, American Red Cross (ARC) mobile-unit and fixed-site blood collections staff throughout Massachusetts, western Ohio and northern Indiana have joined fellow ARC Teamsters in 15 states across the country.

Most recently, Local 170 in Massachusetts organized fixed-site blood technicians and phone recruiters in Raynham, bringing the local's total representation at Red Cross to over 80. Local 170 Secretary-Treasurer Shannon George said, "These employees often interacted with other unionized Red Cross workers in the state and recognized the benefits their unionized counterparts were receiving. We're very happy to bring them in to Local 170 and for them to join the Teamster family."

Eli Gillen, a Local 170 business agent and organizer of the group, is now gathering leads on other nearby fixed-site locations.

In Indiana and western Ohio, Local 414 organized approximately 150 ARC employees who unanimously ratified their first contract this summer.

"There were challenges when attempting to organize, but we stayed strong as a unit and now have a contract that we can be proud of. Moving forward, we are looking forward to a new partnership with management based on mutual respect," said Sarah Hook, a Red Cross mobile collections staff member.

The group's first contract secured improvements to scheduling, seniority and working conditions. The agreement also included increases to the minimum starting wage for all classifications, as well as wage increases for every member of the unit.

"We know that the American Red Cross does important work and we continue to show other Red Cross workers across the country the benefits that come from organizing with the Teamsters," said Michael Filler, Director of the Teamsters Public Services Division. "We remain committed to organizing Red Cross across the country in an effort to ensure employees are respected and fairly compensated for the life-saving work they do."



IOWA PUBLIC SECTOR TEAMSTERS STAND UP TO STATE'S ANTI-UNION EFFORTS

The Hawkeye State's legislature and governor made it a priority in early 2017 to crack down on the ability of unionized public sector workers in the state to collectively bargain. But these lawmakers are learning the Teamsters aren't backing down from this fight.

After a new law was enacted in February, workers were forced to revote on whether to remain in their union. A majority of workers in each unit needed to vote "yes." Non-voters would be counted as a "no" vote. Local 238, with the help of the

International Brotherhood of Teamsters, ran 69 state-sponsored recertification elections for 2,200 bargaining unit members in October. Of the 1,888 members who voted, 1,828 voted to remain with the Teamsters—97 percent of voters.

"Voting to keep their union was the first step in fighting back against wholesale attacks on working families by the Iowa legislature", said Jesse Case, Secretary-Treasurer of Local 238. "Our members are in this fight. These forced elections have backfired on lawmakers and have made us stronger!"

Philadelphia School Administrators Ratify New Contract

• WAGES INCREASES AND BONUSES WON •

In August, members of Local 502/Commonwealth Association of School Administrators (CASA) overwhelmingly ratified a four-year agreement with the School District of Philadelphia.

"It was a hard-fought battle, but we are pleased to be moving forward. We are extremely happy with what we were able to negotiate, including key language around working conditions," said Dr. Robin Cooper, President of Local 502/CASA. "This contract will ensure our schools are adequately staffed and CASA members are safe. The school district has agreed to put in adequate resources to make sure that happens."

The contract covers 550 school administrators and includes long-overdue wage increases and bonuses. In 2014, administrators agreed to reductions in pay to help the district through a budget crisis.

"The significance of this agreement must be recognized as a large step forward for many. After many years of austerity, the parties negotiated a contract that balances the needs of students, as well as the principals and other key administrators who manage one of the largest school systems in the United States," said Michael Filler, Director of the Teamsters Public Services Division.