

President's Report – February 2017



Presidents Report

“Right to work.” There is not a more anti-labor phrase in the English language. To the uninformed “Right to Work” may sound like a good thing, but the reality is far, far different.

Corporations, Chambers of Commerce, and anti-labor legislators for a long time have falsely promoted this innocent sounding phrase by saying that it is all about allowing the worker to have free choice and that it's not fair to make someone pay for union dues as a condition of employment. That's what they want you to believe, but don't be fooled. Calling “Right to Work” good for labor is like calling drowning “Right to Swim”.

Here's the reality. “Right to Work” laws are designed to break unions plain and simple. When enacted, these laws starve unions of funding which greatly impacts the union's ability to effectively legislate, negotiate, and fight on behalf of its members.

What does “Right to Work” mean in the workplace? Look no further than the difference in average wage rates between workers in “Right to Work” states and their counterparts. Workers in “Right to Work” states have wages that are on average 12% lower than their counterparts. “Right to Work” states have lower rates of union participation as misguided

members fall for the trap of "Right to Work" and opt out of paying their fair share of dues money. Once this happens, resources and solidarity are compromised and along with them the leverage that we need to fight for and maintain fair wages, benefits and working conditions.

As members of the airline industry we fall under the Railway Labor Act. This has made us immune from the pitfalls of "Right to Work" laws. That is, until now! Legislation introduced on February 1st of this year (H.R. 785) not only proposes a national "Right to Work" law but also contains language that would strip away the exemption that members in the transportation industry have enjoyed. That's right. They are coming after every union member in this country including you! They want to strip you of your ability to collectively bargain for the best wages, benefits and working conditions. They want to strip you of any say or control in the workplace. They want nothing less than a voiceless employee at will.

H.R. 785 may be the most anti-labor piece of legislation proposed in our lifetime. We must, and we will fight this attack on our right to collective bargaining. In the coming weeks and months we will keep you updated on the progress of H.R.785 and let you know what you can do to help protect your hard won wages and benefits. Stay informed through your committees, union bulletin boards, union websites including our local lodge website "vl1725.org" and our Facebook page "Members of IAM Local Lodge 1725".

Remember, "Right to Work" means "Right to Work for less"