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How to voice your opposition to right-to-work legislation

Posted on 11/29/12 at 2:22pm

Some Lansing politicians and the corporate special interests that fund their political campaigns are set to introduce and/or vote on legislation that would make Michigan a so-called “right-to-work” state. It’s critical that working families across Michigan stand up to this blatant power grab by CEOs and urge their lawmakers to vote NO on right-to-work.

[Click here](#) to find contact information for your legislators.

Below are materials designed to help you frame your message as you communicate with lawmakers and others about why right-to-work is wrong for Michigan. Many people find the materials useful as they prepare to speak with their legislator, write a letter to the editor, post on social media outlets, etc.

The materials consist of:

- **Core messages** designed to explain why right-to-work is wrong for Michigan
- **Key facts** to substantiate the core messages
- **Responses** to false claims made by proponents of right-to-work
- **Sample phone script** for calls to legislators
- **Sample letters to the editor** and a guide to writing letters

Right-to-work: Core messages

We must work together, not tear one another apart. Anti-union politicians in the legislature have moved one anti-worker measure after another, doing nothing to help put Michigan back to work. We need our elected leaders to help create the kind of jobs that pay a fair wage and help give our kids the education they need to have a better life — not exploit our children’s teachers and bus drivers, or the folks who plow our roads in snowstorms, or the nurses who care for us when we’re sick.

Rich CEOs are making a power grab. State politicians and their special interest friends are making a power grab and trying to pass a so-called “right-to-work” law to weaken middle-class families. By undermining workers’ rights, these greedy CEOs gain even more profits — at the expense of our jobs, our retirement security and our kids’ future.

Michiganders support collective bargaining. According to a poll by Lake Research Group released the day after Election Day, 96 percent of Michiganders support collective bargaining, including 55 percent who voted no on Proposal 2. An overwhelming number of voters agree that now is the time for politicians to work together to improve education and create family-sustaining jobs, not change the rules about collective bargaining.

Right-to-work: Key facts

Right-to-work would mean lower wages and benefits for all Michigan workers, regardless of if they’re in a union. In states that have right-to-work laws, workers have a lower standard of living, make an average of \$1,500 less per year, and go without health insurance more frequently. That goes for union and non-union workers alike. In right-to-work states like Mississippi, Texas and Idaho, workers’ pensions were gutted. Thousands of families who had been contributing to their pensions for decades were left with broken promises and no retirement security.

Right-to-work will not improve Michigan economy. Proponents of right-to-work would have you believe that middle-class families in states that have passed right-to-work laws would be better off. They’re not. For example, when a right-to-work law passed in Oklahoma, state legislators promised companies would relocate to the state because of it and there would be more jobs available. But 10 years later, jobs fell by 25 percent and the number of companies moving there dropped by 33 percent.

Unions are a check on corporate power. The real motive behind these attacks on teachers, nurses and firefighters is to silence the voices of Michigan workers by having a state without unions — where nobody stands up for workers when Wall Street executives outsource jobs or cut workers’ benefits. Corporate CEOs spent more than \$1 billion to elect politicians who are willing to do their bidding and give them free reign over our economy. They don’t want any checks on their power. They’ll be able to rob workers of their voice, lower wages, ship more jobs to China and gain even more power for corporate America.



MEA Members Only Political Page

Visit the [Members Only Political Action Page](#).

Retirement-SB1040

Get the latest news on SB 1040 here.

Current Issue



President Cook's Video Message



wages, ship more jobs to China and gain even more power for corporate America.

Right-to-work: Responses to false claims

False claim: “Michigan is lagging behind the rest of the country in nearly all economic indicators. The failure to attract new investments and new jobs is killing our economy. At the same time, jobs are growing in right-to-work states, and we need to give Michigan communities the economic tools needed to grow and attract jobs.”

The truth: We do need to rebuild Michigan. We need to invest in our kids, in our public schools, in the health and safety of our citizens. We need jobs — good jobs — that can support a family. But so-called right-to-work laws do not create jobs. Instead they hurt the economy and workers.

False claim: “It’s wrong to force people to contribute part of their paycheck to something they don’t believe in at risk of losing their jobs. It’s unfair to force people to join a union and pay dues if they disagree with the union’s agenda.”

The truth: No worker is forced to join a union – that’s already against the law. But each person that benefits directly from union representation should pay their fair share of the cost of that representation. Right-to-work allows people to freeload instead.

False claim: “We need to stand up to the unions who have bankrupted our state.”

The truth: Unions didn’t bankrupt the state. The economy collapsed thanks to Wall Street recklessness and CEO greed. What matters most now is that we all work together — unions, business, government and taxpayers — to restore our economy and create jobs that put people back to work. The last thing we should be doing is destroying good middle-class jobs that support Michigan families.”

Right-to-work: Sample phone script

Hello, My name is _____, and I live in _____ (town).

I was surprised to hear that the Legislature is considering so-called right-to-work laws during the lame duck session.

I am calling today because Michigan can’t afford a polarizing attack on collective bargaining. Legislation like right-to-work is likely to draw negative national attention that could drive away investment and jobs from our state.

We have already seen enough recklessness from Wall Street and CEOs when the economy collapsed. We don’t need more division. What matters now is that we all work together – unions, business, government, and taxpayers. Let’s restore our economy and get people back to work – not wreck good middle class jobs that support Michigan Families. Now is the time to work together to create jobs, build infrastructure, and improve education and health care. Michigan has real problems to solve, and as Governor Snyder has pointed out, divisive politics isn’t the way to move our state forward.

As your constituent, I’m expecting you to rise above the politics and stand up to the unnecessary attacks on collective bargaining. Please oppose right-to-work.

Thank you for your time.

Right-to-work: Sample letters to the editor

Below are steps on submitting a letter to the editor, along with sample letters:

1. **Choose the topic** you wish to write about.
2. **Begin writing your letter.** Write clearly on one central point, so that people will understand what you are saying. Make the language your own but keep the central message.
3. **Keep your letter short.** Conciseness and clarity count.
4. **Proofread** it for grammar, spelling and punctuation.
5. **Sign your name and provide your address and telephone number** for verification purposes. Most print publications do not accept screen names, so be prepared to use your full real name.

Stop So-Called Right-to-Work

We need to rebuild Michigan. We need to invest in our kids, in our public schools, in the health and safety of our citizens. We need jobs – good jobs – that can support a family. But so-called right-to-work laws do not create jobs; instead they hurt the economy and workers.

In right-to-work states like South Carolina, Mississippi and Arkansas, workers have lower wages by an average of 3.2 percent, no benefits, and no job security.

Don't make it easier for corporations in Michigan to short change workers. I'm urging my state lawmakers to do everything in their power to stop so-called right-to-work legislation.

Right-to-work is wrong for Michigan

From creating high-quality jobs, to building infrastructure, to improving education and health care, Michigan has real problems to solve. Workers and their unions are an important part of those solutions.

A so-called "right-to-work" law would take our state in the wrong direction and it should not be on the Legislative agenda this session. In states that have right-to-work laws, workers have a lower standard of living, make an average of \$1,500 less per year and go without health insurance more frequently.

Michigan has a proud tradition of collective bargaining, which contributes to a strong middle class. Please don't give into partisan politics to undermine the voice of workers on the job.

Stop the divisiveness

As Governor Snyder has pointed out, divisive politics is not the way to move Michigan forward. That is why I am so disappointed to hear that the Legislature may consider a right-to-work bill during the lame duck session.

This kind of legislation is fundamentally unfair. Each person that benefits directly from union representation should pay their fair share of the cost of that representation.

This is about politics, plain and simple. I expect our elected representatives to rise above the fray and stand up to this unnecessary attempt to pit working people against each other.

Oppose right-to-work

Following on the heels of a polarizing election, legislation attacking collective bargaining rights is likely to draw negative national attention and could drive investment away from our state.

Let's be honest: We all know this isn't about rebuilding Michigan. If it were, middle class families in states that have passed "right-to-work" laws would be better off. They're not. In fact, in right-to-work states like Mississippi, Texas, and Idaho, workers' pensions were gutted. Thousands of workers who had been contributing to their pensions for decades were left with broken promises and no retirement security.

I am counting on our elected leaders to lead our state down a better path by opposing right-to-work and other anti-worker bills.

[Right-to-Work Message Center](#)

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