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Guest Columns

Let's secure our youth's future

By Carla J. Sonntag / President, New Mexico Business Coalition

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New Mexico is the Land of Enchantment, blessed with breathtaking natural vistas and a rich multicultural history. And our people are some of the warmest and kindest you will ever meet.

With all of those blessings you would think our great state would be prospering and rank at the top of every national indicator in growth, jobs and education. Unfortunately, that is just not the case.

In June 2017, New Mexico had an unemployment rate of 6.4 percent, and it was ranked 42nd by Forbes for growth prospects with a poverty rate of 20.4 percent.

How do we explain to our children that we, the business and political leaders of our state, have failed to provide them with the prosperity and opportunity they deserve?

It's time we stop explaining our failures and start taking the bold and necessary steps to secure a future for our youth. One of the things we can do is let employees decide if they want to join a union rather than forcing them to do so.

Right-to-work laws allow workers to opt out of union membership and dues without fear of losing their jobs. Twenty-eight states have right-to-work laws on their books, including nearly all of New Mexico's neighbors. But thanks to a recent federal court decision, local governments can pass their own right-to-work ordinances. And that's exactly what Sandoval County and the City of Rio Rancho have decided to do.

As president of the New Mexico Business Coalition, I support the officials of those jurisdictions in their decision. I am proud to sponsor and include the New Mexico Business Coalition in a letter of support which can be read on our website at nmbizcoalition.org. Other business organizations, community leaders, and liberty-oriented nonprofits have co-signed, and we are glad to have them all.

Organized labor says that right-to-work increases poverty. But that's ridiculous. New Mexico already has an unacceptable poverty level without right-to-work protections, and California, also without right-to-work, has the highest poverty rate in the nation.

The New Mexico Business Coalition (NMBC) is a statewide nonprofit association that works to improve the business environment for companies and the quality of life for all New Mexicans. NMBC's nonpartisan educational efforts focus on providing New Mexicans the facts about regulation, legislation and elected officials' decisions affecting them.