



NEW MEXICO BUSINESS COALITION

Why is Employee Free Choice Important?

Employee Free Choice . also known as **Right to Work**q. gives employees of union operations the choice of whether or not they join a union. Under state law, no employee can be forced to join a labor union in order to work for an employer with a union-negotiated contract. In New Mexico and the other 25 states without Right to Work laws, employees covered by union contracts pay the share of union dues that covers the negotiation. In the 24 Right to Work states, non-union members pay no dues but work under the terms of the union-negotiated contract.

Some common misconceptions:

1) Only 6.2 percent of New Mexico's workforce is union, so it really doesn't matter if we pass this law. While it's true that the percentage of the union workforce is very small in New Mexico, giving employees the choice is very important to our economy.

New Mexico is desperately trying to bring new business and industry into the state. Some relocation experts estimate that about one-third of all companies looking to relocate will not consider a state that does not allow the employee choice regarding union membership. We've also seen nationwide trends of employees moving into Right to Work states and out of those that are not. Could NM use a new industry investment of \$1.75 billion and 6,000 new high paying jobs with benefits?

In 2010, Boeing was unable to reach an agreement with the union in Washington state on wages and other issues, so they decided to open a new 787 plant elsewhere. Boeing considered several factors in order to locate its airplane manufacturing, but top among them was the new location needed to be a Right to Work state. They chose to build a new \$750 million dollar plant in South Carolina, creating 9,000 jobs during the construction phase, and more than 4,000 well-paying jobs with benefits at the plant. New Mexico was never even a consideration in this relocation because we are not a Right to Work state! Boeing recently announced their intention to invest another \$1 billion and add 2000 more new jobs in South Carolina.

2) Wages will drop without union representation. It's hard to compare wages in New Mexico because union representation is either very low or exclusive. For example, you cannot compare wages between union and nonunion within the fire department because they are all union and there is nothing to compare.

You can get a very good idea about this issue within New Mexico's construction industry. There is approximately seven percent (7%) of that industry represented by unions. If you compare wages and benefits from the union shops to the merit (nonunion) shops, you will find them comparable. Sometimes, you will find higher wages in the merit shops and with better benefits as well.



Free enterprise is a system that works well in America, when it's left to operate as designed without government intervention. Employers will pay a fair wage and provide benefits in order to keep employees. If they don't, the employees are free to find a job where they will be treated fairly. That freedom is what equalizes pay and benefits in most circumstances.

3) The poverty rate will increase because jobs will be lost. Actually the opposite is true. New Mexico will see new opportunities for businesses to come here when it provides employees the choice of union membership. More jobs mean more employment and wealth creation. As we get more people to work, we will see the welfare and poverty levels shrink.

4) Right to work is a union busting law. Right to Work simply gives employees the choice of whether or not they want to join a union and pay union dues. Unions that have worked hard for members' rights and been prudent in spending union dues should find their members willingly continue membership after the law is passed. Unions that have not met their members' expectations may lose some members.

A Right to Work law will provide unions an opportunity to improve service and strive to grow membership based on results . not forced membership. That's the way membership works for every other kind of organization, it's only fair to make it that way for unions as well.

According to Watchdog.org, union membership grew in more than half of all Right to Work states in 2014. In fact, Indiana's unions gained 50,000 members and Florida's unions gained 41,000 members. Both of these are Right to Work states.

New Mexico's unions lost 4,000 members from 2012 to 2013, even though it is not a Right to Work state.

5) Right to Work is not very common. There are currently 24 states that are Right to Work states.

6) From HumanEvents.com, Senator Michael Sanchez called Right to Work laws, "mean-spirited" because they lead to "... infant mortality and the likelihood of being killed on the job." Sometimes incredulous statements are made to scare people into supporting or opposing an issue. This is certainly a case of trying to scare people into believing that Right to Work is a bad idea for New Mexico.

The truth, however, is far different from this statement. There are many laws regarding job safety for the protection of employees. Employees will not be any less safe if they choose not to pay union dues. It is the job of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to assure safe workplaces. All companies are subject to those laws and practices whether they are union shops or not.

Right to Work will increase infant mortality . seriously? This doesn't even deserve a response.