

Right to Work Update

National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation • 8001 Braddock Road • Springfield, VA 22160
www.nrtw.org • (703) 321-8510 • 1-800-336-3600

Vol. 1, No. 10 ~ October 29, 2001

Last month, in a tremendous victory for individual liberty, Oklahoma became the nation's 22nd Right to Work state. But before the ink had even dried on the new Right to Work law, union officials vowed a legal challenge in court.

The passage of Oklahoma's Right to Work law on September 25 was the culmination of an eight-year campaign to mobilize Right to Work supporters while building strong support among Oklahoma's citizens and elected officials, who deserve the credit for bringing freedom and jobs to the Sooner State.

Oklahoma's Right to Work law will not only prevent union officials from getting employees fired for refusing to support a union; it will also lead to the creation of thousands of new high-paying jobs and greater economic prosperity for Oklahoma's working families.

What is a Right to Work law?

Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act, passed by Congress in 1947, reaffirmed the right of states to pass Right to Work laws. Under state Right to Work laws, workers cannot be forced to join or pay union dues as a condition of employment. (Employees who work on federal property may or may not be protected by their state's Right to Work law, depending on specific circumstances.)

Since forced union dues are their life blood, union officials fight ferociously to stop the passage of Right to Work laws. In Oklahoma, for example, they spent \$8 million on a deceitful media campaign to mislead the public about the merits of voluntary unionism. In one instance, union officials even went as far as questioning the constitutionality of state Right to Work laws, even though the U.S. Supreme Court ruled more than 50 years ago in *Lincoln Federal Labor Union v. Northwestern Iron and Metal Co.* that the laws are absolutely constitutional.

Right to Work means greater economic prosperity for Oklahoma's working families

No one in Oklahoma understands the importance of a Right to Work law better than Oklahoma's Governor Frank Keating, who was a tireless advocate for its passage for many years and took a leading role this year.

Studies by economists of all stripes show that living costs are lower and, consequently, real incomes are higher in Right to Work states when compared to states that don't currently protect employees from federally imposed forced unionism.

Data released by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1998 showed that:

- Right to Work states have had lower unemployment rates than non-Right to Work states in every year but four since 1978.
- Since 1977, Right to Work states have created non-farm jobs at a pace twice that of non-Right to Work states.
- In the heavily unionized construction industry, Right to Work states have created jobs at a rate almost one-third greater than non-Right to Work states since 1977.
- In the manufacturing sector, Right to Work states have gained over 800,000 jobs since 1977, while the compulsory unionism states lost almost 2 million jobs.

Right to Work builds momentum

Oklahomans reaffirmed what a vast majority of the American people already believe – that no individual should be forced to pay union dues in order to keep his or her job.

National Right to Work Foundation Vice President Stefan Gleason vowed the Foundation will be vigilant in making sure that Oklahoma union officials do not violate Oklahoma workers' rights under the new law.

While the National Right to Work Committee continues to build support within the U.S. Congress and many state legislatures for additional Right to Work laws, the Foundation stands ready to defend Oklahoma's new law while continuing to advance the rights of union-abused employees through the nation's courts.

Additional information on the rights of employees in Right to Work states is available at www.nrtw.org/a/a_prime.htm.

Reality Check

Myth: Idaho's economy has been depressed since passage of a Right to Work law in 1985.

-Deceptive union TV ad opposing Oklahoma's Right to Work law

Reality: "Business has flocked to Idaho" since 1986.

-Idaho AFL-CIO President Dave Whaley, Labor Day weekend op-ed for the *Idaho Falls Post-Register*

The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization providing free legal aid to employees whose human or civil rights have been violated by compulsory unionism abuses. The Foundation, which can be contacted toll-free at 1-800-336-3600, is assisting thousands of employees in nearly 500 cases nationwide. Its web site is at www.nrtw.org.