



Chartered by United Food & Commercial Workers International Union  
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September 6, 2007

**ERNEST L. DURAN, JR.**  
 President  
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**STANISLAW KANIA**  
 Secretary-Treasurer

Ms. Nancy Doty  
 Arapahoe County Clerk and Recorder  
 Arapahoe County Administration Building  
 5334 S. Prince Street  
 Littleton, CO 80166-0001

SEP 10 2007

FACE THE STATE

Dear Ms. Doty:

Ryan Frazier, Aurora City Councilperson At Large, is the co-sponsor of a Right-to-Work-for-Less Initiative. The same will be placed upon the 2008 ballot.

The bill has absolutely nothing to do with a right to work. The same will simply weaken Unions and hurt workers. An example of how Right-to-Work-for-Less hurts workers appears in the cities of Fort Collins, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming. A Safeway All Purpose Food Clerk earns over three dollars (\$3.00) an hour less in Cheyenne than they do in Fort Collins. Same corporation. Same work. Same Union. The only difference is Wyoming is a Right-to-Work-for-Less state. Right-to-Work for Less weakens unions taking away money needed for negotiations, public relations, politics and the enforcement of contracts. Enclosed are several fact sheets.

We are developing our campaign to defeat the initiative. I am writing to seek your help. Would you please complete the enclosed card and return? Someone from our staff will contact you in response to the completed card.

Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the foregoing, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

*Ernest L. Duran, Jr.*

Ernest L. Duran, Jr.  
 President, UFCW Local 7  
 UFCW International Vice President  
 Attorney and Counselor at Law

ELD/dal/ufcw local 7

Enclosure(s)

cc: Staff  
 Executive Board



## *The Truth About*

# Right to Work for Less

## Right to Work Hurts Everyone

Workers in states with right to work laws have a consistently lower quality of life than in other states—lower wages, higher poverty and infant mortality rates, less access to the health care they need and poorer education for their children.

### Lower Wages

The average worker in a right to work state makes about \$5,333 a year less than workers in other states (\$35,500 compared with \$30,167).<sup>1</sup> Weekly wages are \$72 greater in free-bargaining states than in right to work states (\$621 versus \$549).<sup>2</sup>

### Fewer People with Health Care

21 percent more people lack health insurance in right to work states compared to free-bargaining states.<sup>3</sup>

### Higher Poverty and Infant Mortality Rates

Right to work states have a poverty rate of 12.5 percent, compared with 10.2 percent in other states.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the infant mortality rate is 16 percent higher in right to work states.<sup>5</sup>

### Lower Workers' Compensation Benefits for Workers Injured on the Job

Maximum weekly worker compensation benefits are \$30 higher in free states (\$609 versus \$579 in right to work states).<sup>6</sup>

### More Workplace Deaths and Injuries

According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the rate of workplace deaths is 51 percent higher in states with right to work, where unions can't speak up on behalf of workers.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Average Annual Pay, 2001 from Bureau of Labor Statistics, State average annual pay for 2000 and 2001 and percent change in pay for all covered workers. URL: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/annpay.t01.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics.

<sup>3</sup> Percent of population lacking health insurance from Current Population Survey, March 2002. Table HI06. Health Insurance coverage status by state for all people: 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Poverty Rate in 2001 from U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2002. URL: [http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032002/pov/new25\\_001.htm](http://ferret.bls.census.gov/macro/032002/pov/new25_001.htm).

<sup>5</sup> O'Leary Morgan, Kathleen, and Scott Morgan, State Rankings 2001. Morgan Quitno Press, 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Workers' Compensation data from the AFL-CIO Department of Safety and Health.

<sup>7</sup> Workplace Fatalities from *Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect*. AFL-CIO. April, 2002.

## Right to Work and Women

Unions benefit *all* workers by raising wages for everyone, including women whose higher incomes help support their families. Right to work laws hurt women and their families by keeping wages low.

- Union women earn \$149 more each week than nonunion women.

## *The Truth Continued*

- Union membership narrows the pay gap for women. Nationally, the gap between men's and women's pay is 32 percent—but between all men and union women the gap is only 5 percent.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, January 2002.

## **Right to Work Hurts People of Color Most**

By holding down union membership, right to work laws hurt *all* workers but especially people of color, who benefit most from belonging to a union.

- Latino union members earn 45 percent (\$180) more each week than nonunion Latinos.
- African Americans earn 30 percent (\$140) more each week if they are union members.
- In two occupations with high representation of African Americans—protective services and machine operators—union members earn 56 percent and 39 percent more, respectively, than their nonunion counterparts.

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, January 2002.

## **What's at Stake for Unionized Employers?**

Unionized employers have a lot to gain by standing up for workers' rights and opposing right to work laws:

- **Right to work makes it harder for unionized employers to compete for business.** Many unions retain their membership in right to work states, although adding new bargaining units is made more difficult. This means that while unionized employers stay unionized, nonunion firms can remain unorganized and gain an even greater competitive advantage based on low-wage, no-benefit jobs.
- **That's especially true in construction.** Unionized construction companies may have the most to gain from opposing right to work and other attacks on union membership. Unionized construction companies compete largely on the basis of better quality work because they provide more training, have fewer injuries on the job and are more productive. All these competitive advantages are threatened when low-road companies can drive down wages because of anti-union legislation.
- **Right to work reduces consumer spending.** Because union membership means higher wages, higher unionization within a community means consumers have more to spend. That's good for local companies, especially those in retail sales and services.
- **Right to work brings government interference to private enterprise.** A right to work law takes union security off the bargaining table. In effect, government limits the right of employers to set the terms and conditions of employment by telling companies and their workers what they can and can't bargain over. Labor and management should have the freedom to agree upon the conditions of work—without the government dictating to them.

# The GOP's "Right to Work" vs. Your Right to Know the Facts

By David Sirotta

Working Assets/Denver Post's Politics West, 9/5/07

The Denver Post's resident "me first, everyone else be damned" conservative David Harsanyi does his best stenographer routine today, using his column to promote Aurora City Councilman Ryan Frazier's (R) so-called "right to work" ballot initiative which proposes to force unions to collectively bargain for workers who refuse to contribute to the union. The column is wonderful in both its stylistic banality and copy-and-pasted flavor - it has been written an infinite number of times by an infinite number of right-wing parrots over an infinite number of years. This makes it a terrific sample specimen to help us dissect all the core fallacies of the overreaching "right to work" ideology - an ideology that at its core is aimed at ending the labor movement.

So without further delay, let's dive right in.

## THE DOUBLE STANDARD

Harsanyi starts out by saying it is supposedly a horrible and unprecedented atrocity when unions use the resources its members contribute collectively for political activities which some of its members may or may not support. This, we are led to believe, is unique to unions. Yet, there is no mention that that's precisely what happens when you are a shareholder of a company. Many people own lots of shares of stock and do not support management using company resources - that is, shareholder resources - for the political causes those companies push. Companies spend far more money on political causes than unions (more on that in a moment) and are, in fact, under far less obligation to tell shareholders where they spend resources than unions. So if there's a problem here, it is far more a corporate problem than a union problem. But neither Harsanyi or the Republican hack he transcribes bothers to mention those facts.

## THE MYTH OF THE ALL-POWERFUL UNION

Harsanyi cites an anti-union front group to claim that unions spent \$925 million on "political expenditures" during the 2004 election cycle, and that such a factually suspect figure "illustrates a great deal of political influence." But as we all know, "political influence" is relative. \$925 million sounds like a lot of money - but it sounds like a little when you compare it to the billions that corporations spend on politics. As I report in *Hostile Takeover*, the data shows that for every one dollar contributed by labor unions business interests gave \$15. When looking at just individual contributions to lawmakers, the gap is even more pronounced: Business executives out-contributed labor leaders and staff by a factor of 1,000 to 1. This data is quite literally not disputed by any newspapers media organizations, or nonpartisan watchdog groups. It is not disputed, in other

words, by anyone other than a handful of operatives working inside a few right-wing, corporate-funded organizations. The idea that unions' political contributions make them as powerful or more powerful than Corporate America in the political process is so silly and so factually absurd that no respectable journalist with any integrity would even imply such a thing.

## THE DISDAIN FOR DEMOCRACY

Harsanyi says that when successful elections to unionize a workplace happen, it is a tragedy for those who "happen to vote no" because those workers are forced to collectively bargain with their employer for better wages and benefits (more on that in a moment). Yes, this is precisely what "democracy" is. When you vote "no" for a political candidate who does not win, say, a seat in the legislature, you have to live under that legislator's proposals. You don't have a choice, because the majority won. If you don't like that, then you don't like democracy (which many conservative pundits don't).

## THE CLAIM OF "FREEDOM" AND "CHOICE"

Harsanyi closes his piece with more stenography, quoting Frazier saying "it's a bunch of baloney" that a right-to-work initiative "makes it harder for workers." Frazier claims his proposal "does not hurt workers, it gives them a choice to be a part of a union - if they want to be part of it." Now we're into the real guts of the dishonesty.

No one - not even conservative automatons - disputes all of the benefits that unionized workplace brings workers: Higher wages, better health care and retirement benefits, etc. Workers get those things by pooling their dues and standing in solidarity to form a union that collectively bargains with the employer. A right-to-work initiative says that any worker can decide not to contribute to those collective efforts, yet work under the contract (and all the better benefits) that the union secured - even if, by the way, the contract previously said the employer will only hire union labor (ie. a union shop). As American Rights at Work notes, unions in "right to work" states "are required by law to defend non-dues paying members involved in a dispute or charged with a grievance at work, but even those employees do not have to contribute dues."

This is not a choice, nor is it freedom, nor is it fair. It sets up a situation whereby unions and their members who stand in solidarity are forced to give away their assets (ie. a contract made possible by union dues and collective bargaining) for free.

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So, just to review - according to Harsanyi, Frazier and the tiny handful of corporate elites who run the "right to work" initiatives:

- Unions should not be allowed to spend resources on campaigns that some of its members may not support, but corporations should be allowed to spend resources on campaigns that many of its stockholders do not support.
- Unions are all-powerful political forces whose campaign contributions mean they wield "a great deal of political influence" even though unions contributions are dwarfed by corporate contributions at a ratio of roughly 15-to-1.

- Even if unions win a democratic election, they should not be able to act on behalf of all workers in a workplace because a minority of workers voted no. Yet, in every other arena where democracy exists, the majority should be entitled to the benefits of winning an election.
- Forcing unions and their members to spend resources on collectively bargaining for non-members constitutes "freedom" and allowing workers who don't want to contribute to a union nonetheless get all the benefits of a union is fair.

What these inherent hypocrisies show is that the "right to work" initiatives are designed not to give workers "freedom" but to undermine unions in two ways - first by eliminating their ability to collectively negotiate for union shops and build larger membership with better bargaining power and second by forcing unions to expend resources collectively bargaining for people who do not contribute to the union.

Luckily, Coloradoans seem to understand that "right to work" initiatives are ploys by Big Money interests to drive down wages by undermining the labor movement. As government data shows, the average worker in a "right to work" state makes about \$5,000 less per year than other workers.

A statewide poll shows that once Coloradoans get beyond the happy-sounding "right to work" misnomer and hear the details of what it actually means, the majority opposes it.

**"As government data shows, the average worker in a "right to work" state makes about \$5,000 less per year than other workers."**

Additionally, even Colorado's business community has said publicly it has "no desire" for Frazier's "right to work" initiative.

But that doesn't deter the crowd pushing the "right to work" initiatives. They don't care if there is no grassroots support for their agenda. Aspiring, ladder-climbing politicians like Frazier have their eye on a different audience. They are undoubtedly looking for praise, approval and support from Grover Norquist's network of out-of-state corporate front groups like the National Right to Work Committee - a sham organization funded almost exclusively by multinational corporations. And they are, as usual, aided and abetted by whatever right-wing mouthpiece happens to have a media platform, and happens to be willing to ignore objective facts.

# SUPPORT THE FIGHT AGAINST RIGHT-TO-WORK-FOR-LESS

Would you be willing to commit to any of the following:

- I hereby authorize United Food & Commercial Workers Union, Local No. 7 to use my name and my picture in literature opposing right-to-work for less.
- I agree to appear in a media campaign (TV/radio/newspapers/internet) against right-to-work for less.
- I will attend a news conference opposing right-to-work for less.

I prefer to be contacted via (circle) email      phone      US Mail

PRINT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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