

Help us Stop so-called “Right to Work” in Wisconsin

As you may have heard, the Wisconsin Senate will be considering action on so-called “Right to Work” legislation very soon. If passed, this law will have a negative impact on the construction industry, on our jobs, our union, and our families. Please call and email your State Legislators and tell them to oppose making Wisconsin a “Right to Work” state.

What is “Right to Work”?

Right now in Wisconsin, we have one of the best, most professional, highest-skill work forces in the country, especially in the construction industry. And, our current system works really well. Anyone who works for a union contractor pays union dues, contributes to the training fund, and pays into our health and pension funds. And, everyone enjoys good wages and benefits, excellent training (at no expense to tax payers), and the union partners with our employers to help recruit and train our workforce, staff jobs, and provide service to members.

In “Right to Work” states, the payment of union dues is optional. But don’t get me wrong – everyone who works for a union contractor will still receive the same union-negotiated wage rates, still gets the union health care and pension benefits, and can still come to our union training centers for training. They just have the option of whether or not they want to pay for it. “Right to Work” is simply a political strategy to weaken unions by starving us of the resources we need to provide services to our members and contractors. Can you imagine if the health club you attend or the shooting range you go to were required to offer services to everyone whether or not they paid dues? This is the same scenario.

The fact is that if Wisconsin becomes a “Right to Work” state, our union will be weaker because some members will opt out of paying dues. That means that our ability to recruit and train workers will suffer. Our ability to bargain strong wages and benefits will weaken. Benefits will begin to be less generous. In “Right to Work” states around the country, wages and benefits for construction workers are significantly less than they are in Wisconsin, and we don’t want that to happen here.

Tell Your Legislator that “Right to Work” is bad for Wisconsin

Your legislators need to hear from you TODAY. Call or email them and ask them to oppose “Right to Work”. To find out who represents you, go here: <http://maps.legis.wisconsin.gov/>. Type your address into the search bar on the upper right side of the page, and the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of your legislators will appear.

A sample letter that you can customize and email to your legislator is located on the homepage of our website, www.northcountrycarpenter.org

Here are some great talking points you can use when you call your legislator:

- In Wisconsin’s construction industry, things are working just fine. My union negotiates with my private sector employer, and we come to an agreement about the terms and conditions of employment. State government should stay out of those negotiations.
- More than 400 construction contractors in Wisconsin have formed a coalition to oppose “Right to Work”. The construction industry – even the employers – are opposed to this harmful law.

- “Right to Work” will harm our industry. Wages and benefits will stagnate, our ability to provide excellent training at no cost to tax payers will suffer. Who’s going to pay for our training if the unions can’t do it?
- Union construction workers contribute \$30 million for training and facilities annually. The burden will shift to property taxpayers if we no longer can afford to pay for our training.
- Right now, everyone pays their dues and everyone gets the benefits. It isn’t fair to allow everyone to get the benefits, but only some to pay for them

What else can you do?

The Senate Committee on Labor and Government Reform will hold a public hearing Tuesday, February 24, at 10 a.m. at the state Capitol in Madison on Senate Bill 44, room 411 South. Please consider attending as we stand together for our rights as workers and raise our voices to stop Right to Work legislation from moving forward in Wisconsin. The public hearing will conclude no later than 7 p.m.

All members are invited and encouraged to gather with other building trades members at 8 a.m. Tuesday, February 24, at Monona Terrace, 1 John Nolan Drive in Madison, 53703.

There will be rallies to protest the introduction of Right to Work legislation Tuesday, February 24, and Wednesday, February 25, at 12:00 p.m. at the Capitol.

Please spread the word with your family, friends and co-workers. Use Facebook, email and your telephone to contact people you know personally to share your point of view and to encourage them to get involved with this very important issue.