

The Attack on Unions...

A MIDST the never-ending hot winds of Trump-era controversies and scandals, U.S. Reps. Steve King and Joe Wilson in February introduced the National Right to Work Act before the U.S. House of Representatives.

This bill, H.R. 785, promises, “To preserve and protect the free choice of individual employees to form, join, or assist labor organizations, or to refrain from such activities.”

Nothing could be further from the truth.

If enacted, this law will destroy the rights of workers to organize throughout the nation, turning the United States into Wisconsin, which under the leadership of Koch Brothers puppet Gov. Scott Walker, destroyed the collective bargaining rights of tens of thousands of workers in the state.

This bill is a dagger to the heart of labor.

The law introduces poison into the New Deal-era National Labor Relations Act and Railway Labor Act — laws that were passed to protect workers’ rights — in order to forcibly impose right-to-work in all 50 states.

At this time, 28 states have such laws, which are used

by employers to suppress wages and to gut worksite protections.

These revisions to long-established labor laws will require union members to cover the costs of agency fee payers — who enjoy the benefits of union membership but refuse to join to union.

By design, if passed, the National Right to Work Act will destroy every union’s power to bargain in good faith and threaten hard-fought gains in working conditions, benefits, and pensions.

The consequences of passing this bill can already be seen in states that enacted right-to-work.

Nine of the states with the highest poverty rates are right-to-work states. Workers in right-to-work states typically earn \$6,109 less a year than their counterparts in states where workers have the right to bargaining freely. Workers in right-to-work states typically have fewer benefits, such as employer-paid health care and pensions, and they endure poor working conditions.

We must stand up to this direct attack on our union rights, and resist with the full might of our collective union power.

... with help from those out to destroy us

A network of right-wing extremists is behind the nationwide effort to destroy the labor movement through legal actions and legislation.

The National Right to Work Foundation and its legal arm, the National Right to Work Legal Foundation, are the attack dogs of the campaign to cripple labor.

This effort is two-pronged:

- weakening the power of unions by bankrolling lawsuits that undermine their right to represent workers by convincing the courts to declare collecting dues to pay for services unconstitutional, and
- providing national and state legislators with right-to-work model legislation.

Twenty-eight states now have right-to-work laws.

Missouri enacted the most recent one in February following Kentucky, which adopted a law in January. In February, legislators turned down a right-to-work bill in New Hampshire, which would have become the first right-to-work state in the Northeast had it passed.

Besides the National Right to Work Foundation and the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, the right-to-work network includes the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), which provides state legislators with legislative prototypes. The Koch brothers are among its supporters.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the nation’s most powerful business lobbying group, has long supported right-to-work legislation. This group spent nearly a century trying to destroy unions and opposing pro-labor legislation like minimum wage laws, legal protections for workers and fair labor standards.

Now, with the Republican takeover of Washington, these anti-labor interests are close to obtaining a national right-to-work law. Republicans introduced the Right to Work bill in February.

If we lose this fight, we will possibly be faced with the challenge of having to rebuild the labor movement from scratch. We must fight back.

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