

Right to Work in 'Walter ReutherLand'?

Poll Shows 3-2 Majority of Michigan Voters Back Forced-Dues Ban

Walter Reuther must be spinning in his grave.

For decades, this United Auto Workers (UAW) union czar and self-styled "architect of the future" was a dominant force in Michigan politics.

And no influential politician in the state dared question the legal privilege of Mr. Reuther and other Big Labor bosses to get workers fired if they refused to fork over compulsory union dues, which he bluntly labeled as "taxes."

In Michigan, establishment Republicans like Govs. George Romney and William Milliken as well as union-label Democrat politicians pledged their fealty to forced unionism.

However, as a new poll reconfirms, the Right to Work principle has enjoyed the support of most Michigan citizens for many years.

And as Michigan's economy continues, despite numerous "pro-business" initiatives undertaken since the early nineties, to stagger under the burden of compulsory unionism, several prominent figures in Michigan politics are beginning to advocate enactment of a state Right to Work law.

Young People Entering The Workforce Have To Leave the State

Forced-unionism Michigan's economic problems are manifold, but one single statistic is especially indicative of where the state is headed:

Between 1982 and 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the share of Americans aged 25-34 who live in Michigan plummeted from 4.0% to 3.3%.

And the hemorrhaging of young employees and entrepreneurs, as well as their family members and other citizens, is continuing in the new millennium.

Between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2003, Michigan lost an additional 78,000 citizens as a result of net out-migration to other states.

Significantly, the six states suffering from even worse domestic out-migration than Michigan during this period also have both private- and public-sector compulsory unionism.

But the seven states enjoying the greatest net in-migration of people from other states all have Right to Work laws.

(See the table above for details.)

Biggest Gainers and Losers From Domestic Migration, 2000-2003

Population Gainers

Florida*	540,529
Arizona*	194,704
Nevada*	146,688
Georgia*	140,009
North Carolina*	107,641
Texas*	106,964
Virginia*	77,716

Population Losers

New York	-551,672
California	-277,188
Illinois	-238,404
Ohio	-103,400
Massachusetts	-102,905
New Jersey	-92,699
Michigan	-78,251

Right to Work states are asterisked.

Figures denote net migration from other states between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2003.

Source: Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau.

States enjoying the greatest net in-migration of people from other states all have Right to Work laws. But

neither Michigan nor any of the other states suffering the worst out-migration has such a law.

"As much as they might want to claim the status quo in Michigan is fine, union bosses and their apologists can't conceal the fact that huge numbers of young people entering the work force have to leave the state," noted Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"The forced-unionism status quo isn't fine.

"And within the not-too-distant future Michigan politicians who refuse to deal with the problem will learn their careers are in jeopardy," he predicted.

'Michigan Citizens Want To Have This Discussion'

The respected Michigan polling firm EPIC/MRA conducted a statewide survey on the Right to Work issue in June after state Republican Party Chairwoman Betsy DeVos had kicked off a furor by acknowledging the obvious: "States with Right to Work environments have an advantage in attracting new jobs."

The survey results show that, apparently dismissing Big Labor politicians' histrionic denunciations of Mrs. DeVos's truism, a 53% to 35% majority of Michigan voters agree with her support for a state Right to Work law.

Support increased to 57% to 34% when respondents were given more information about the issue.

"Because most Michiganders have no personal experience with Right to Work laws and how they operate, but are familiar with union propaganda claims against such laws, Right to Work support is still significantly below the national average," said Mr. Mix.

"Nationwide, regular voters support Right to Work by an overwhelming 79% to 19% margin, according to a Research 2000 survey conducted earlier this year by veteran Maryland-based pollster Del Ali.

"Michigan union bosses may derive some comfort in the fact that Wolverine State voters support Right to Work by 'only' a 3-2 majority, instead of a 4-1 majority. However, the state's trend is clearly not in Big Labor's favor."

Demonstrating that union-boss appeasers are no longer consistently calling the shots in the Michigan GOP, state party spokesman Matt Davis backed up Mrs. DeVos in a statement responding to the publication of the EPIC/MRA poll.

"It's important to have a mature discussion of Michigan's future and its competitiveness," said Mr. Daniels.

"This [poll] indicates that Michigan citizens want to have this discussion." 