

Sooners Celebrate Right to Work Anniversary

Since 2001, Incomes Have Risen and Poverty Has Fallen in Oklahoma

Five years ago this month, one of Big Labor's most formidable fear-and-loathing campaigns ever failed when Oklahoma approved a statewide ban on compulsory union dues and fees and thus became the nation's 22nd Right to Work state.

Almost immediately, the very union bosses who had been shrilly predicting that a Sooner Right to Work law would swiftly lead to disaster moved to prevent the law from having any impact at all.

When the Right to Work law had been in effect just seven weeks, Big Labor lawyers launched an underhanded bid to overturn it. This legal attack kept the law's future under a cloud for more than two years.

Personal Income in Oklahoma Now Growing Faster Than in Any Forced-Unionism State

But in December 2003, the state's attorneys and Right to Work attorneys intervening on behalf of several independent-minded workers finally prevailed when the Oklahoma Supreme Court unanimously rejected national AFL-CIO Associate General Counsel Larry Gold's demand that it overturn the law.

"Since the union bosses' legal assault on Oklahomans' Right to Work was thwarted, the state's economy has picked up more and more strength," observed Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"From the first quarter of 2005 through the first quarter of 2006, real personal income in Oklahoma grew by 2.9% — roughly double the national average and three times as fast as the overall average of the 28 forced-dues states.

"According to the most recent U.S. Department of Commerce report, personal income in the Sooner State is now growing faster than in every single forced-dues state.

"A wide array of businesses have recently made or announced major new investments in Oklahoma.

"For example, this June Mercury MerCruiser, a manufacturer of stern drive marine engines, broke ground on a 23,000-square-foot expansion of its die-casting operations in Stillwater, Okla.

"The \$13.5 million expansion is adding new jobs for machinists and die-cast operators.

"And this expansion was chosen over several possible offshore locations,

including China and Mexico.

"To mention just one other example, in July the newly formed MG Motors announced it was reviving the famous British MG brand, with headquarters in Oklahoma City. Assembly and distribution operations will be located in Ardmore, and research and development will be in Norman at the University of Oklahoma.

"MG Motors will create hundreds of jobs with a payroll in excess of \$30 million."

Right to Work Laws Benefit Citizens at All Income Levels

Right to Work laws facilitate the creation of high-paying jobs, manufacturing and non-manufacturing alike, because they help improve a state's general business climate.

"In states where forced dues are legal," explained Mr. Stafford, "union campaign operatives use a large chunk of the forced dues they grab to elect politicians who are beholden to Big Labor's agenda of higher taxes, more government spending, and strait-jacket regulation of business.

"This high-tax, high-regulation agenda hinders the creation of service and manufacturing jobs alike.

"That's why Right to Work laws increase opportunities for all kinds of citizens — at all income levels.

"According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 2000–2001 and 2004–2005, Oklahoma's constant-dollar median household income increased by roughly \$750, while the national median fell by nearly \$670 as a result of the 2001 recession and subsequent slow recovery.

"During the same period, the Sooner poverty rate dropped by 1.8 percentage points, while poverty increased by 1.2 percentage points nationwide.

"The evidence is clear that Oklahoma's Right to Work law is transforming the state. And the biggest benefits are yet to come."

Across the country, improved public understanding of the salutary economic impact of state Right to Work laws is helping to spur popular movements to ban forced union dues in more and more states.

"Committee members are greatly encouraged by the growing movements in states like Missouri, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and New Hampshire," commented Mr. Stafford.

"And we will do everything possible to help ensure their success." 📌

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OKLAHOMA
Wrongful death alleged at home
Leshia Tucker filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Choctaw Living Centers Inc., where her son, Don L. "D.L." McCormick Jr., spent the last year of his life. The lawsuit alleges the center "allowed and failed to prevent mental and physical abuse of its patients," including her son.

Another delay in murder trial
An Oklahoma County murder trial plagued with out-of-the-ordinary problems and delays over the last six weeks faced yet another hurdle when all but one of the sequestered jurors wanted to vote in Tuesday's right-to-work election. **Page 4-A**

FOOD
Best Scoop Contest
Here's the scoop

Voters OK right to work
Right to Work FOR OKLAHOMA Freedom • Families •
Issue passes with 54%
By John Grubner
Capital Bureau

Oklahoma became a right-to-work state Tuesday. With all 2,187 precincts reporting, State Question 605 on right to work won with 54 percent of the vote, according to unofficial returns from the state Election Board.

The proposal jumped ahead early and continued to hold 53 percent to 54 percent of the vote throughout the night.

Right to work passed by a vote of 447,072 to 376,965.

The election was a rematch of one held 37 years ago when Oklahomans defeated a right-to-work proposal.

Proponents who gathered Tuesday night at the Myriad Convention Center in Oklahoma City, said they are confident the law will stimulate the Oklahoma economy by attracting businesses and creating momentum for other economic opportunities.

Opponents of right to work manufacturing," Calvey said.

Opponents of right to work more arts in education.

State Rep. Kevin Calvey, R-Ed. City, said Oklahomans should see the effects of right to work within two years.

"I would expect to see significant job growth, especially in manufacturing," Calvey said.

Althus businessmen Ken Pappesen, a Democrat, called for more arts in education.

See REACTION, Page 4-A See VOTE, Page 4-A

Gov. Frank Keating shows his enthusiasm Tuesday night after hearing the right-to-work measure passed.

By Diane Plamberg Clay and Tom Lindley
Capital Bureau

Moments after Gov. Frank Keating shook both fists in the air proclaiming victory for right to work Tuesday night, supporters called for lower taxes, cheaper insurance and better education.

Opponents turned their sights to the 2002 election.

"We're alive," Keating said in a victory speech to more than 400 supporters at the Myriad Convention Center.

"For too long, we've been held back and held down. We are now open for business."

He said Tuesday's passage of a right-to-work law would stimulate the Oklahoma economy by attracting businesses and creating momentum for other economic opportunities.

Keating called the idea a four-legged stool with three legs left.

House Minority Leader Fred Morgan, R-Oklahoma City, said

he shares the same fervor for higher standards in education. However, he said he wanted to focus more on making sure the state's graduates are trained well enough to fill the jobs right to work will bring to the state.

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House Minority Leader Fred Morgan, R-Oklahoma City, said

In late September 2001, Oklahoma defied Big Labor by approving a statewide ban on forced union dues.

Today, the state's personal income growth is faster than that of any of the remaining forced-dues states.