

Forced Unionism at Issue in Kentucky This Fall

Right to Work States Outpace Bluegrass State in Employment Growth

With its central location and relatively low cost of living, Kentucky should have little trouble competing with other states.

However, as the Bluegrass State prepares for its gubernatorial election this November, political observers of all stripes agree the state has a major, chronic problem:

Kentucky simply isn't creating enough good jobs.

Between 2001 and 2006, according to the U.S. Labor Department, private-sector job growth in Kentucky was more than 27% below the national average. Labor Department data also suggest this lagging performance is largely attributable to the absence of a Right to Work law.

As a group, the 22 Right to Work states enjoyed a strong 6.3% increase in private-sector employment between 2001 and 2006.

And Right to Work states' increase in private-sector employment was nearly triple the increase of Kentucky and five times as great as that of forced-unionism states overall.

Overwhelming Majority of Kentuckians Support the Right to Work Principle

Fortunately, two candidates that received major-party nominations for governor and lieutenant governor in Kentucky's May 22 primaries have



CREDIT: GOVERNOR.KY.GOV

Ernie Fletcher has pledged to keep pushing for approval of a Kentucky Right to Work law.

pledged to fight for enactment of a state Right to Work law over the next four years if they are elected on November 6.

GOP Gov. Ernie Fletcher, who has consistently supported Right to Work throughout his first term and won nomination for a second term, vowed in a survey he returned in April to the Frankfort-based Kentucky Right to Work Committee to continue opposing compulsory unionism if he is reelected.

And the GOP nominee for lieutenant governor, Robbie Rudolph, who is currently the secretary of Mr. Fletcher's Executive Cabinet, has also promised full support for Right to Work.

The Fletcher-Rudolph ticket easily prevailed over well-financed primary opposition from two other tickets of candidates who had refused to answer their Right to Work surveys.

Record of Snubbing Right To Work Supporters Clearly Hurt Northup Campaign

Coming in second with just 36% of the GOP primary vote, compared to 50% for Fletcher-Rudolph, was a ticket headed by former Congresswoman Anne Northup.

Although a number of political pundits originally predicted Ms. Northup would be a very strong contender against Mr. Fletcher when she announced her primary challenge early this year, her candidacy was clearly hampered by her record of snubbing Right to Work supporters.

In addition to refusing to fill out her Right to Work gubernatorial survey this year, Ms. Northup for years ignored constituent pleas that she publicly support and cosponsor national Right to Work legislation when she was in Congress.

In the general election, Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Rudolph will be facing off against Big Labor Democrats Steve Beshear, a former lieutenant governor, and Dan Mongiardo, an unsuccessful candidate for U.S. senator in 2004.

"An overwhelming majority of Kentucky citizens support the Right to Work principle," noted Matthew Leen, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"And, unless Steve Beshear and Dan Mongiardo repudiate their records of support for forced unionism, there will be a clear contrast on the Right to Work

issue between the two major-party gubernatorial tickets this fall."

National Committee Will Help Grass-Roots Group Show Why Right to Work Is Key Issue

Mr. Leen pointed to a December 2006 scientific survey by veteran pollster Del Ali and his firm Research 2000 of Kentuckians who say they regularly vote in statewide elections.

The survey found that, by a lopsided 77% to 21% margin, with the rest undecided, Kentuckians agree that a person ought to be able to hold a job "regardless of whether or not he or she belongs to a union."

"Right to Work laws are primarily about employee freedom of choice," noted Mr. Leen.

"They simply bar the firing of both private- and public-sector employees for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union.

"In addition to protecting workers' freedom of choice, Right to Work laws help create jobs and improve living standards.

"For both moral and economic reasons, more and more citizens in Kentucky and other forced-unionism states are getting involved in efforts to pass new state Right to Work laws."

With the assistance of the National Committee, the Kentucky Right to Work group will over the course of this summer and fall repeatedly contact freedom-loving citizens to remind them why Right to Work is so important for their state's future and encourage them to lobby the candidates on the issue.

'Steve Beshear and Dan Mongiardo Must Feel the Heat'

"Steve Beshear and Dan Mongiardo must feel the heat from Kentucky citizens who want them to stop kowtowing to Big Labor and start standing up for the future of the state," said Mr. Leen.

"Kentucky citizens will also be urged to contact the Fletcher-Rudolph ticket to thank them for supporting Right to Work.

"No Kentucky employee should be forced to pay union dues just to get or keep a job. And no Kentucky gubernatorial candidate can be allowed to dodge the Right to Work issue." 