

Young Employees Thrive in Right to Work States

Millions Have 'Voted With Their Feet' For Better Opportunities

Because of the "baby bust" that occurred in the 1970's, in the U.S. as a whole today there are significantly fewer young people in their late twenties and early thirties than there were just a few years ago.

In 1991, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were 42.9 million people aged 25-34 living in the U.S. By 2005, there were just 40.1 million people nationwide in that age bracket.

The nationwide decline in the number of 25-34 year-olds is clearly an impediment to economic growth because of the group's high participation in the labor force.

But not all states have been equally affected by the "baby bust." Many have attracted more than enough young people from other states to make up for the trend in births.

And an important factor behind whether young people are "voting with their feet" by moving into a state is the presence of a Right to Work law.

In the Right to Work states as a group (excluding Oklahoma, whose Right to Work law took effect in September 2001), the number of 25-34 year-olds actually increased by 5.5% between 1991 and 2005.

Meanwhile, the 28 states without Right to Work laws collectively saw their 25-34 year-old population shrink by 12.8%.

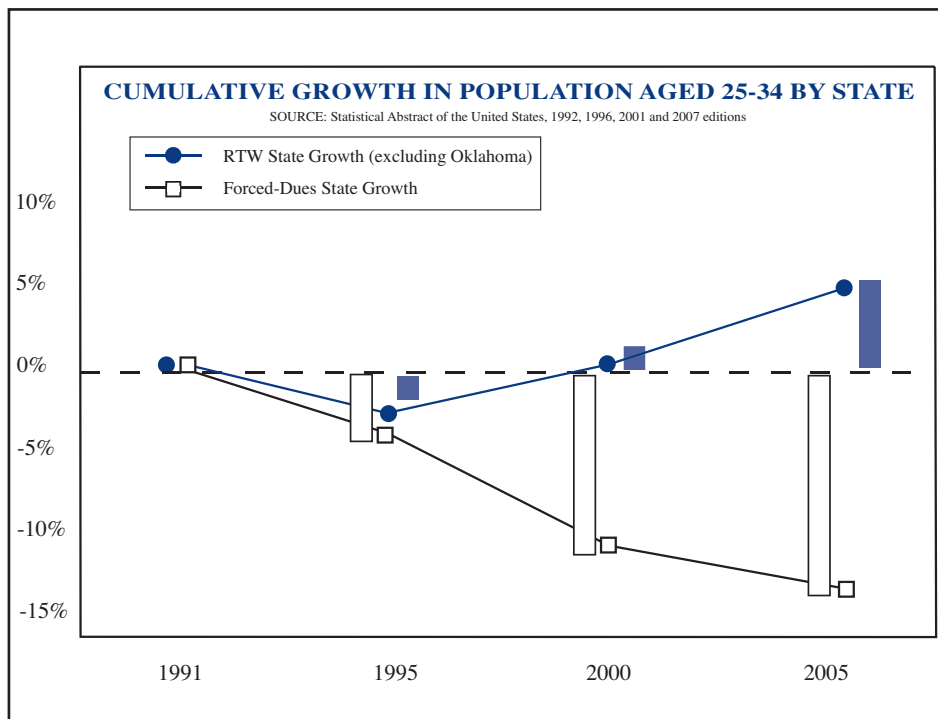
Nine states (Alaska, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Vermont) endured declines of 20% or more. Not one of these states has a Right to Work law.

Four states (Arizona, Idaho, Nevada and Utah) experienced increases of 20% or more. All four have Right to Work laws.

High Manufacturing-Density Right to Work States Also Flourishing

State Right to Work laws prohibit forcing private- and public-sector employees to join or pay dues or so-called "agency" fees to an unwanted union as a condition of employment.

Unless private-sector, front-line employees are protected by a state Right to Work law, they are subject to the provisions in federal labor law that authorize and promote the firing of employees for refusal to pay union dues or fees.



By 2005, there were 820,000 more 25-34 year-olds in Right to Work states than there had been in 1991.

Meanwhile, the number of 25-34 year-olds in non-Right to Work states fell by nearly 3.5 million.

"Right to Work laws' core function is safeguarding the individual employee's freedom of choice," commented National Right to Work Committee Vice President Matthew Leen. "They are also strongly correlated with higher living standards."

As evidence, Mr. Leen cited a study of cost of living-adjusted household incomes of all recognized metropolitan areas in the U.S. by Dr. Barry Poulson, an economics professor at the University of Colorado (UC) and past president of the North American Economics and Finance Association.

Dr. Poulson found that, when the number of households in each metro area is factored into the equation, the average cost of living-adjusted household income in Right to Work state metro areas was \$50,751, compared to \$46,313 in non-Right to Work state metro areas.

"Union officials sometimes make the excuse that young people are fleeing forced-unionism states because many of them have traditionally depended on manufacturing, which faces stiff international competition, for a higher-than-average share of their jobs," Mr. Leen added.

"What they ignore is that high manufacturing-density Right to Work states are flourishing."

National Right to Work Law Would Widen Success

"Take the example of North Carolina," said Mr. Leen. "In 2006, the share of its private-sector jobs in manufacturing was roughly 17%, or about the same as in the economically troubled forced-unionism stronghold of Ohio."

"Yet over the 1991 to 2005 period, North Carolina's 25-34 year-old population grew by 10.0%, while Ohio's shrank by 17.6%."

"In stark contrast to stagnant forced-unionism Ohio, Right to Work North Carolina is 'a rising powerhouse in lucrative new manufacturing sectors,' as the *Washington Post* recently put it."

Both to protect the freedom of millions of employees who are still subject to forced unionism and to widen the economic success now being experienced by Right to Work states, concluded Mr. Leen, America needs a national Right to Work law. 📌