

'What Is Ron Gettelfinger Afraid of?'

Big Labor Bankrolls Anti-Right to Work TV Ad Campaign in Michigan

Over the Christmas holidays, many Michigan citizens were surprised to see and hear former Detroit news anchor Bill Bonds, who recently has remained in the public eye as a pitchman for personal-injury lawyer Sam Bernstein, featured in new TV and radio ads for a mysterious outfit known as "Wrong for Michigan."

In the "Wrong for Michigan" ads, which are still airing as this month's Newsletter goes to press, the frequently bombastic Mr. Bonds makes an ill-informed attack on efforts to enact a Right to Work law in the Wolverine State.

As many Right to Work readers can easily infer from the above information alone, "Wrong for Michigan" is a Big Labor front group that is being bankrolled largely with the forced dues and fees of union boss-"represented" employees.

And among the union bosses who are funneling forced dues-paying workers' money into the Bill Bonds TV and radio ads and other expensive anti-Right to Work efforts this winter, United Autoworkers (UAW) international union chief Ron Gettelfinger is likely funneling most of all.

At first blush, Michigan, where Big Labor wields "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining power to bargain with employers over the pay, benefits, and work rules of a higher share of private-sector employees than in all but one other state in the continental U.S., doesn't seem likely to go Right to Work very soon.

"One has to ask oneself," commented National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix, "what is Ron Gettelfinger so afraid of?"

Jim Hoffa Admits Michigan Is 'One of the Worst States' Economically

"And the answer may be, Mr. Gettelfinger fears that Michigan citizens, naturally cautious just like most other people, are becoming more receptive to proposals for dramatic change in their state's labor policies, because its economy is so bad," he continued.

Even international Teamster boss Jim Hoffa admitted last spring that Big Labor-controlled Michigan is now "one of the worst states" economically. As Mr. Hoffa explained to Detroit radio news anchor Jayne Bower, "There's plants everywhere closed down."



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This winter, Detroit-based international union chief Ron Gettelfinger is liberally spending employees' forced-dues

dollars to thwart efforts to make Michigan a Right to Work state. Is he right to be worried?

For once, Mr. Hoffa had it right. Over the past five years for which U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data are available, Michigan lost a net 205,000, or 5.3%, of its private-sector jobs. That's the worst job-creation record of any of the 50 states.

And the evidence is strong that Michigan's lack of a Right to Work law, which would protect employees from being fired for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union, constitutes a major part of what's wrong with the state economy.

Over the past five years, the 22 Right to Work states' aggregate private-sector job growth of 6.3% was more than *five times greater* than the 28 forced-dues states' aggregate growth of just 1.2%.

Looking at Michigan's region of the country alone, the five Midwestern Right to Work states had a combined private-sector job growth of 2.6%, while the seven non-Right to Work states suffered an overall decline of 0.8%.

Scientific Poll: Michiganians Favor Right to Work by More Than Two to One

Another cause of concern for Ron Gettelfinger is the fact that this winter the

National Right to Work Committee and the Lansing-based Michigan Right to Work Committee are teaming up to mobilize support for state legislation that would prohibit all forced union dues and fees.

Two Right to Work measures (H.B.4454 and 4455) are currently pending in the state House of Representatives, and two others (S.B.607 and 608) are pending in the Senate.

"As Ron Gettelfinger and other Wolverine State union bosses certainly know, Michiganians strongly favor the Right to Work principle," commented Mr. Mix.

"A scientific, December 2006 survey by veteran pollster Del Ali and his firm Research 2000 found that Michigan citizens agree, by more than a two to one margin, that no one should be forced to belong to a union as a condition of employment.

"However, experience shows that strong public opposition to a policy never suffices to change it unless that opposition is mobilized at the grass-roots level.

"That's exactly what legislative staffers for the National and Michigan Right to Work Committees are doing right now. If he's looking just over the horizon, Ron Gettelfinger really does have a lot to be afraid of!" 