

# School Enrollments Fall in Forced-Dues States

## *Big Labor-Dominated Economies in Early Stage of 'Eurosclerosis'*

Many Americans who follow foreign news are aware of one of the most significant long-term problems faced by the slow-growing economies of most European countries and Japan: a long-term decline in the number of children combined with a steady increase in the number of elderly people that will continue for decades.

Economists understandably view this trend as a major negative because it almost inevitably means that over time fewer and fewer workers will be responsible for taking care of more and more retirees.

The trend in the U.S. as a whole is less unfavorable: While the elderly constitute by far the fastest growing age bloc here, the number of schoolchildren is at an all-time high.

Just from the 2003-2004 to the 2006-2007 school years, the number of K-12 public schoolchildren nationwide increased by 1.6%, from 48.13 million to 48.89 million.

(These data are furnished by the National Education Association teacher union hierarchy. Educational observers agree that while the NEA bosses' interpretations of NEA enrollment data are frequently suspect, the data themselves are reliable.)

However, many individual states have begun in recent years to endure European-style declines in their school populations, and this is most evident when one culls out the secondary-school enrollments and focuses on grades K-8.

### **'Right to Work States Are Simply Better For Raising Children'**

From 2003-2004 to 2006-2007, 23 of the 50 states suffered declines in their total K-8 public school enrollments. And, excluding Hurricane Katrina-ravaged Louisiana and Mississippi, 86% of the states with declining enrollments have no Right to Work laws on the books.

Over the three-year period, overall K-8 public school enrollment in the 22 Right to Work states increased by 341,000, or nearly three percent.

Meanwhile, overall enrollment in the 28 non-Right to Work states fell by 200,000, or 1.1%. And U.S. Census data trends for the populations aged 0-17 of



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**Parents and prospective parents seeking to provide better for their families are moving in droves to Right to Work**

**states. The number of K-8 public schoolchildren in forced-unionism states is consequently declining.**

the 50 states indicate that the decline in non-Right to Work states is likely to keep steepening for years to come.

Why does the number of schoolchildren keep rising in Right to Work states, which protect employees from being fired for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union, even as it falls in states that do not protect employees from forced unionism?

The reason is not immigration from abroad, which affects both Right to Work states and non-Right to Work states more or less equally.

The real reason is that parents and prospective parents are moving in droves to Right to Work states. They find these states, with their generally higher real incomes and lower living costs, to be more attractive places to live.

"Right to Work states are simply better places for raising children," commented Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Even data furnished in a 2003 American Federation of Teachers union survey showed that on average living costs, excluding all taxes, are roughly 15% higher in non-Right to Work states than in Right to Work states.

"Study after study that factors in cost-

of-living differences shows that, on average, employees' real earnings are higher in Right to Work states.

"For example, a National Institute for Labor Relations Research study using a cost-of-living index found in Congressional Quarterly's *State Fact Finder 2006* found that average real weekly earnings are slightly more than 5% higher in Right to Work states than in non-Right to Work states.

"And for couples that are relying on a single income or cutting back their working hours in order to raise children, the Right to Work advantage is especially salient."

### **National Right to Work Law Is Prescription For Incipient 'Eurosclerosis'**

"Fortunately for forced-unionism states, there is a cure for the incipient 'Eurosclerosis' from which many of them are suffering," continued Mr. Stafford.

"The prescription is legislation that would strike all provisions currently authorizing forced union dues and fees from federal law, known as the National Right to Work Act. It is now pending in the U.S. House and Senate as H.R.697 and S.1301." 📌