

# Right to Work Statute 'Directly Affected Me'

## Nevada Law Helped Video Journalist Valerie Bischoff Launch Career

Valerie Bischoff, a 26-year-old Columbia University graduate student, has won the 2008 Ruggles journalism scholarship with an essay that relates both her personal and her principled reasons for opposing compulsory unionism.

Four years ago, after graduating with honors in Film and Digital Media from the University of California at Santa Cruz, Ms. Bischoff was eager to get a job, as she noted in her essay, "that would provide first-hand experience in video production."

Through both perseverance and good fortune, she was soon able to land just such a career-launching job at a major network-affiliated station in her hometown of Reno, Nev.

And two important reasons why she had this opportunity are that "Nevada is a Right to Work state" and the station that hired her is an "open shop."

Union bosses armed with monopoly-bargaining privileges frequently wield them to browbeat employers into acquiescing to restrictive work rules that deny new hires such as Ms. Bischoff the opportunity to take on demanding jobs, even if they are fully capable of handling them.

Furthermore, the cost of paying forced union dues and possibly even participating in strikes "would have been a hardship . . . and the cost could have compromised my ability to gain initial experience."



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**Nevada's Right to Work law helped Valerie Bischoff get hands-on experience in video production.**

Ms. Bischoff's essay concludes: "[T]he right to unionize is one of our fundamental freedoms. However, the validity of this right can only be realized if the members of the union are involved because of choice. Thankfully, in 22 states, the Right to Work law protects this freedom."

### Scholarship Bolsters Right to Work Cause

"National Right to Work Committee members deserve credit for the fact that today nearly 40% of American private-sector workers are protected by state Right to Work laws," said Committee Vice President Matthew Leen.

"When Valerie Bischoff was born in 1982, fewer than a third of private-sector employees nationwide enjoyed Right to Work protection.

"And H.R.697/S.1301, legislation now pending in the U.S. House and Senate, would repeal the provisions in federal labor law that authorize forced union dues and fees.

"In a small but important way, the Ruggles scholarship is helping hasten the day when this legislation becomes law."

Established in 1974, the Ruggles scholarship is designed to encourage budding journalists to follow in the footsteps of the late journalist and Dallas *Morning News* editor William Ruggles. Since 1997, the scholarship has been administered by the National Institute for Labor Relations Research.

Mr. Ruggles coined the phrase "Right to Work" in a 1941 Labor Day editorial entitled "Magna Carta."

The scholarship, which has introduced thousands of future opinion makers to the important Right to Work issue, is open to all students majoring in journalism or mass communications.

Scholarship applications are accepted each year from January 1 to March 31.

### Students From Around the Nation Competed For Right To Work Scholarship

This year, Valerie Bischoff's writing skills and her passion for freedom won her the \$2000 Ruggles scholarship, which will help her continue her graduate studies at Columbia in Film Writing and Directing.

Her career goal is to work as a video producer, creating longer format and "sweeps" style news pieces.

Students from nearly every state and many foreign countries submitted essays about the importance of protecting the Right to Work without being forced to pay union dues.

For copies of the 2008 prize-winning essay or "Magna Carta," write to Cathy Jones, care of the National Institute for Labor Relations Research, 5211 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Va., 22151. You may also use [clj@nrtw.org](mailto:clj@nrtw.org) to reach her by e-mail. 📧

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**National Right to Work Committee®**

8001 Braddock Road  
Springfield, Va. 22160

E-mail: [Members@NRTW.org](mailto:Members@NRTW.org)

**Mark Mix** . . . . . President  
**Reed Larson** . . . . . Exec. Cmte. Chairman  
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**Doug Stafford** . . . . . Vice President  
**Stanley Greer** . . . . . Newsletter Editor  
Editorial comments only: [stg@nrtw.org](mailto:stg@nrtw.org)

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