

Why's Michigan the 'Epicenter of Unemployment'?

More and More Citizens Recognize Forced Unionism as Major Culprit

The closings of several plants producing pickups and SUV's wasn't the only unwanted publicity the Wolverine State received late last month. The state was also the subject of a dispiriting article by *BusinessWeek's* David Kiley.

The article, entitled "Michigan: Epicenter of Unemployment," is filled with gloomy quotes from job seekers and job recruiters. Characteristic is job-fair organizer Jim Perry's assessment that Michigan's employment picture is now worse than during the troubled early eighties:

"Then, workers were being laid off, but these jobs are being eliminated. . . . And they are going at a much faster rate than we can replace them."

Federal data cited by Mr. Kiley reinforce Mr. Perry's dire assessment: "Michigan . . . leads the U.S. in unemployment. The state's unemployment rate hit 8.5% in May. That's up two percentage points from April, and compares with a figure of 5.5% for the whole U.S. in May."

Young People Have to Leave The State to Get Jobs

The real picture is even worse than such data show. Michigan's measured unemployment rate would be far higher but for the fact that huge numbers of onetime residents have for years sought and obtained jobs in other states. This is especially true of young people.

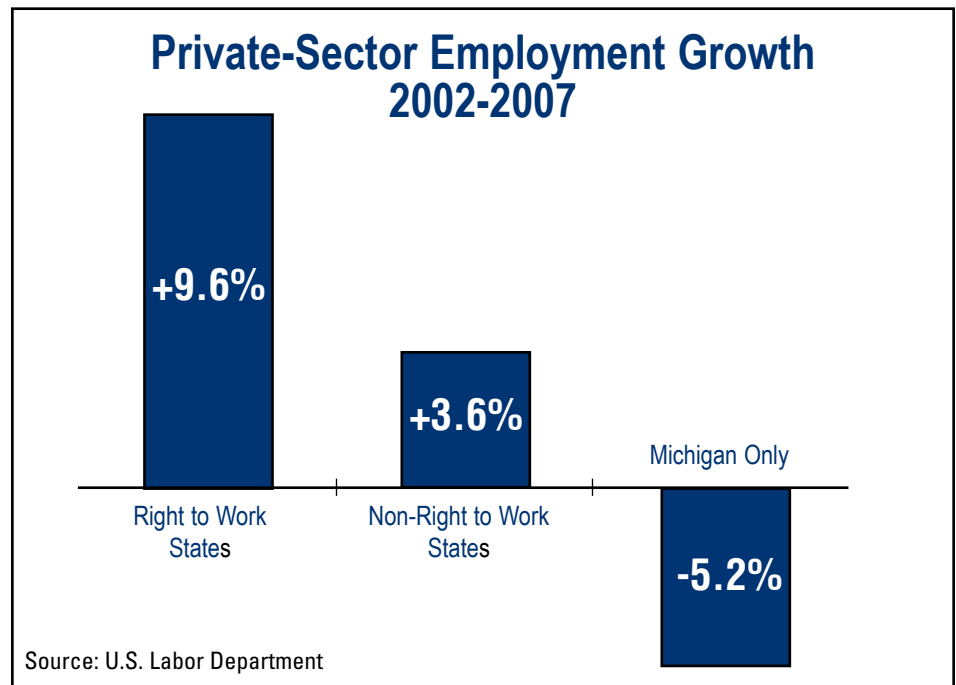
Between 1982 and 2006, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the share of Americans aged 25-34 who live in Michigan plummeted from 4.0% to 3.1%.

And the hemorrhaging of young employees and entrepreneurs, as well as their family members and other citizens, is continuing in the new millennium.

Between April 1, 2000 and July 1, 2007, Michigan lost an additional 360,000 citizens as a result of net out-migration to other states. This was the fifth worst out-migration of any state.

Significantly, of the eight states suffering from the worst domestic out-migration during this period, all except Hurricane Katrina-ravaged Louisiana have both private- and public-sector compulsory unionism.

But the eight states enjoying the greatest net in-migration of people from other states all have Right to Work laws on the books



Between 2002 and 2007, forced-unionism Michigan lost a stinging 5.2% of its private-sector jobs, but private-sector

jobs in Right to Work states increased by 9.6%. Many Michigan citizens have noticed the disparity.

barring all forced union dues and fees.

"For some time now, even Big Labor politicians like Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm have admitted that the status quo in Michigan is bad. They just claim forced unionism isn't to blame," said Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

Law 'Would Facilitate Robust Job Creation'

"But countless thousands of young citizens are proving Ms. Granholm and company wrong by seeking and finding good jobs in states that already have Right to Work laws," Mr. Mix commented. "And Michigan politicians who refuse to recognize reality are jeopardizing their careers."

Currently, 14 state representatives and senators are sponsoring or cosponsoring measures (H.B.4454 and S.B.607) that would make Michigan a Right to Work state.

And several influential political observers are encouraging more legislators to get on board.

For example, in a recent op-ed, well-known Michigan economist Michael LaFaive argued that enactment of a

state Right to Work law "would facilitate robust job creation in Michigan."

Meanwhile, the grass-roots Michigan Right to Work Committee is preparing to survey all major-party candidates for the Michigan Legislature this year regarding their stands on a state Right to Work and other important related issues.

The Michigan group is also preparing to mobilize thousands and thousands of identified Right to Work supporters across the state to contact their candidates and urge them to pledge 100% support for Right to Work.

Mr. Mix promised that the National Committee would do everything possible to assist the efforts of this fast-growing organization and other pro-Right to Work groups and individuals in Michigan.

"The fact that a higher share of private-sector employees in Michigan are forced to pay union dues than in all but one other state in the continental U.S. certainly has a lot to do with its being the 'epicenter of unemployment,'" he declared.

"That means economists like Michael LaFaive are right in contending that enactment of a state Right to Work law could help turn the state into a job-creation hub." 📧