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Letters to the Editor
The Intelligencer/Wheeling News Register
1500 Main Street
Wheeling, WV 26003
Fax: (304) 232-1399

WV Being Left Behind Without Right to Work

(Submitted via email.)

RE: "Right-to-Work In West Virginia??" (5/21/2007)

Pro-forced unionism state politicians like Del. Orphy Klempa and Sen. Andy McKenzie are harming West Virginia's economy by opposing enactment of a Right to Work law, which would make union membership and dues payment purely voluntary and personal decisions.

Not surprisingly, union bosses vehemently oppose such laws, now on the books in 22 states. Instead, they favor federal and state policies that force roughly 12 million American employees to pay union dues or fees – or be fired from their jobs.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, between 2001 and 2006, states with Right to Work laws on the books saw a 6.3% growth in private-sector employment, picking up a whopping 2.6 million jobs. Meanwhile, forced-unionism states squeaked out a 1.2% increase – less than a fifth as much.

Young people recognize the advantages of this economic liberty: From 1995 to 2005, the number of 25 to 34 year-olds increased by 8.6% in Right to Work states, but *fell* by 7.7% in non-Right to Work states. Across America, forced-unionism states struggle with this "brain drain."

But Right to Work isn't just good economics; it's fundamentally an issue of freedom. If union officials actually offer a valuable service, employees will voluntarily choose to join and support the organization. Forcing employees to do so against their will breeds union corruption and unaccountability. It is not only an economic detriment to workers, but an affront to our American values of individual liberty.

If they are truly committed, as they claim, to creating more good jobs for Mountaineers, Klempa and McKenzie should support H.B.2408, pending legislation, introduced by Del. John Overington, that would make West Virginia a Right to Work state.

Doug Stafford
Vice President
National Right to Work Committee
8001 Braddock Rd., #500
Springfield, Virginia 22160
(703) 321-9820