

Stand Up for Workers, Not Billionaires

Stop Right-to-Work in West Virginia!

West Virginia has a gang of lawmakers in this State Capitol who are not just not inclined to help working people, they are intent on attacking the fundamental rights of West Virginia workers.

West Virginia is one of 13 states where the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and its billionaire benefactors are trying this year to pass right-to-work-for-less legislation. You may hear a lot of high-sounding hooey about why they want to do it, but the truth is they want to do it for one simple reason. They want to strengthen the hand of business and the rich and weaken the hand of working people.

Brothers and Sisters, right-to-work is wrong. Right-to-work is wrong.

Right-to-work laws drive down wages. The average worker in a right-to-work state earns \$1,500 less per year than a worker in a non-right-to-work state.

Right-to-work laws undermine worker safety. You're 52% more likely to die in a workplace accident in a right-to-work state.



And right-to-work is not the economic boon its proponents claim. Eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment rates are right-to-work states. That's right – right-to-work has nothing to do with actual right-to-work, to have a job, to earn a living. Right-to-work is a fraud. We don't need right-to-work. We need workers' rights!

Brothers and Sisters, these are disturbing and dangerous times. Right-to-work is just one of more than half a dozen bills pending before the West Virginia Legislature that attack workers' rights and will result in making life worse for West Virginia workers.

Together, these bills will make worse the economic inequality that plagues this state and our nation. They will make worse an ugly imbalance that has 95% of all new income in America going to the wealthiest 1% of the population. They will make worse an economic injustice that sees the average American worker today earning less in real dollar terms than his predecessor did 40 years ago.

Our message to West Virginia's lawmakers is this: If you want to do good for the State of West Virginia, stand up for highway workers, not high rollers; stand up for human service workers, not bankers; for hospital workers, not billionaires, for teachers, not one percenters. Don't cut wages to the minimum. Raise the minimum wage. Don't subtract workers' rights. Add the right to collective bargaining for public employees. That's how you make workers' lives better. That's how you can do good for West Virginia.

(Excerpts from remarks by UE Director of Organization Bob Kingsley at West Virginia State Capitol.)