



**Opening Statement of Rep. Bob Good (R-VA), Chairman
Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions
Hearing: “Safeguarding Workers' Rights and Liberties”
November 30, 2023**

(As prepared for delivery)

The right to work in this country—free from coercion by the government—is a right enshrined in our founding documents. While state right-to-work legislation is a product of the 20th century, its fundamental tenets of liberty, freedom, and self-determination are timeless and enduring.

Representative Joe Wilson’s *National Right-to-Work Act* embodies these core American values. It asserts that no man or woman should be forced to finance a union as a term of his or her employment.

Unfortunately, in 24 states, the law is actually the opposite of this principle. Employees have two options: pay union dues or be fired. This threat is a violation of the God-given right for Americans to determine how they spend their hard-earned paychecks.

The Heritage Foundation estimates that 94 percent of workers did not vote for their inherited union representation, meaning that a mere 6 percent of workers have consented to the union that negotiates on behalf of 100 percent of their coworkers. This means new employees’ interests are not necessarily represented in negotiations, resulting in their being denied fair representation in the future.

The 94 percent deserve a choice, and polls indicate that about 75 percent of Americans agree that workers should be able to decide whether to join – or leave – a labor union.

This is not surprising, given right-to-work states have increased manufacturing

employment, output, and personal income. In fact, during the 40-year period between 1978 and 2017, employment in right-to-work states grew by 105 percent compared to 49 percent among non-right-to-work states.

Nevertheless, Democrats and the Biden administration are working hard to strip all workers of their right to choose. The anti-choice Democrat goal is to force everyone to join a union by upending independent contractors' livelihoods, overturning NLRB election precedents, and passing the anti-right-to-work PRO Act.

We hear complaints from the other side of the so-called "free rider" problem—that right-to-work laws allow non-dues paying employees to benefit from collective bargaining agreements. But this critique omits a key detail: No union is compelled to cover every employee in the workplace. The Supreme Court has affirmed and reaffirmed the right of unions to negotiate "members-only" contracts many times.

The truth—and the catch—is that unions enjoy their monopolistic control over the workplace. Members-only unions would increase competition—the enemy of unpopular unions.

Democrats often serve as the policy arm for Big Labor activists, while Republicans are comfortable letting the free market operate unencumbered by Washington bureaucrats. The *National Right-to-Work Act* only repeals a few lines of statutes. It doesn't add a letter to the federal law.

So, let's give workers the right to work and end compulsory union membership. Let's make every state a right to work state, and ask unions prove their value to the people they claim to represent.