

SEA / SEIU LOCAL 1984



FACT SHEET



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Right to Work

Goal: To Explain the NH and US Legislation called “Right to Work.”

In the context of U.S. labor politics, "**Right to work (for less) laws**" refer to state laws that prohibit union security agreements between employers and labor unions. Under these laws, employees in unionized workplaces are banned from negotiating contracts that require employees who are not union members to contribute to the costs of union representation.

Argument: “Right to work” is the name for a policy designed to hurt unions and take away rights from working people. Backers of “right to work” claim that these laws protect workers against being forced to join a union. The reality is that federal law already makes it illegal to force someone to join a union.

History of NH “Right to Work” (RTW)

1947 – NH Passed first RTW legislation

1949 – RTW legislation repealed

1980 – RTW legislation is re-introduced

2011 – Right to Work bill passed and then Vetoed by Governor Lynch

2012 – Senate brought forward another version of RTW tabled in committee

2013 – House tries again and fails

2017 – House rejects RTW legislation in a 200-177 vote

2021 – HB 61 Current Bill [SB61](#)

History of NH “Right to Bargain” (RTB) Labor Laws

1975 – NH Public Employee Labor Relations Act gives workers the right to unionize and bargain collectively with public employers.

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1935 - The National Labor Relations Act provides for union elections and bargaining with employers for wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Therefore, unions have the People Power to:

- Increase wages
- Bargain for health insurance
- Create and maintain pensions
- Establish leave policies
- Establish sick policies, including the Family Medical Leave Act
- Set overtime pay
- Set shift differential pay
- Set standardized workweek of 40 hours a week.
- Establish safety committees and standards
- Establish non-discrimination policies

National

- The real purpose of a right-to-work law is to tilt the balance toward big corporations and further influence the system at the expense of working families.
- These laws make it harder for working people to form unions and collectively bargain for better wages, benefits, and working conditions.
- Right-to-work laws eliminate freedoms and flexibility for workers and forfeit job security and benefits in right-to-work states.
- The right-to-work means more pressure on struggling working-class families, not less.

State

- Twelve of the 15 states with the worst pay gaps between men and women are “right-to-work” states.
- Right-to-work states attract businesses who want to pay lower wages. While new companies may come to right-to-work states, they could also take their companies overseas or other states to reduce wages.
- Workers in RTW states earn 12.2% less annually than workers in states without RTW laws.
- They have a greater incidence of workplace fatalities
- They are less likely to have health insurance and more likely to pay more out-of-pocket expenses for their insurance
- RTW states have higher poverty rates and infant mortality rates
- They invest less in education
- Just by living in a right-to-work state, the average worker gives up \$1,540 in salary every year.
- Right-to-work laws eliminate freedoms and flexibility for workers and forfeit job security and benefits in right-to-work states.

Local

New Hampshire's RTW bill, SB61, is extreme and completely unnecessary. Most items in this bill are already encapsulated in federal or state legislation, namely:

- The Janus vs. AFSCME decision eliminated the "fair share membership requirement" paid for the cost of negotiation of a fair contract and defending the collective bargaining agreement when necessary.
- Every State employee who joins a union already signs a card stating that they are requesting to join a union and have the dues come out of their paychecks.
- The right to strike is already prohibited in RSA273-A:13 for a union, so it is unnecessary as written in 273-D:6.
- The right to fine and put someone in jail for up to 90 days is unnecessary for any labor legislation. It is unknown what specifically would be an action that would warrant a fine and jail time. The intent needs to be explained more fully.