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## Daily Mail editorial: Democratic policies at odds with good sense

West Virginia Democrats are quick to tell voters where they stand on a right-to-work law.

“We oppose right-to-work legislation,” House Minority Leader Tim Miley, D-Harrison, said when his caucus unveiled its legislative agenda last week.

Right-to-work laws allow workers in unionized workplaces to opt out of not only joining, but also paying fees to the union, even if they are covered by union contracts. The law would protect workers who don’t want to pay for union political activities, which generally benefit Democrats.

As it stands now, employees in union shops have little say in how their union dues are spent. Sure, there is a limited exception in which members who object to the union’s political activities can pay slightly reduced dues, but ask any union member how easy it is to get that paperwork completed. So generally, in rejecting a right-to-work law, Democrats are supporting forced unionization.

A separate issue is forced pooling. The legislation would allow property owners to come together in agreement to allow gas companies to extract natural gas from their land. Under current law, it only takes one holdout to prevent development of a mineral tract and stop the economic boom it can provide all leaseholders. A similar bill failed to pass the Legislature last year.

Democrats have already taken a stand against forced pooling: “The Democratic Party stands for property rights and individual property rights in the state of West Virginia,” Delegate Isaac Sponaugle, D-Preston, said, later adding, “We are united on that.”

But a quick glance at the roll calls on House Bill 2688 in the 2015 session shows Democrats were not united in their stand against pooling. The bill first passed the House by a bipartisan vote of 60-40. Miley and other liberal Democrats voted in support of the initial legislation.

Now, Democrats say they will not support forced pooling, which could put money — and lots of it — in the pockets of willing property owners. At the same time, Democrats are OK with forcing workers to pay union dues — which takes money out of their pockets — and may be used to support activities the workers may or may not agree with.

Why support forcing West Virginians to do some things — especially when Democrat lawmakers benefit — but not others, when it’s a landowner getting a hand? It seems Democrats’ policy priorities are at odds with one another.

With an election coming up this year, voters are paying attention. Many obstacles lie in the way of economic prosperity and Democratic lawmakers should join with Republicans to alleviate those burdens, not add to them.