
Daily Mail editorial: Business reforms not about union busting

Union leaders want you to believe that efforts by legislators to pass business-friendly reforms are anti-worker and intended to bust unions in West Virginia.

Not so. Those legislators seek a stronger business climate, which means a stronger jobs climate. More jobs means more people working. More people working means more opportunities for workers to unionize if they so desire.

And therein lies the rub: if workers so desire.

The business friendly reforms take no stand on whether workers unionize. There are many laws and court decisions protecting unions, and the reforms being tried by the first truly business-friendly Legislature in generations would not harm any worker's right to join and support a union.

The two most notable reforms — right to work, which passed the Senate on Thursday, and prevailing wage — simply wouldn't use the force of state law to require workers and taxpayers to pay union organizations.

Labor unions have provided great benefit for American workers over the years. Workers in all sectors can thank unions for 40-hour work weeks, overtime and countless safety protections. But the global economy has gone far from the days of company bosses mistreating workers on the factory floor.

“Given that U.S. workers and businesses face rising global competition, it is important for policymakers to reexamine labor union laws and repeal those laws that are harmful to economic growth and inconsistent with a free society,” wrote Charles W. Baird in a Cato Institute essay about reforming labor laws.

And allowing workplace freedom is one proposal consistent with the free society Americans support.

“Will unions have to work harder to collect the same amount of money in member dues that they now collect in dues plus agency fees? Yes,” say Ilya Shapiro and Jayme Weber in an essay about free speech and labor unions. “But the result will be that unions will become more responsive to the workers they represent.”

The state needs to pursue every effort to make itself more attractive for job growth and more attractive to workers. Union workers will remain protected in the proposed reforms. But the gravy train of forced money into union coffers would end, and that is why union bosses want you to think the reforms are anti-worker.

Giving workers a choice in whether to pay union dues and more opportunities to work seems more pro-worker than West Virginia has ever been.