



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on January 4, 2012

Ind. Gov. Daniels Prepares for New Right-to-Work Battle

Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels (left) is taking on a major right-to-work battle in his state by promoting a labor bill which, though expected to bring more jobs to the state, has enraged labor unions. The Blaze reports, "Before he leaves his office in January 2013, Daniels will be pushing right to work legislation that would ban private companies and labor unions from negotiating contracts with mandatory labor fees."



Unsurprisingly, union leaders, who contend that the bill would turn the state of Indiana into Mississippi of the Midwest, have already vowed to fight the legislation vehemently. They announced a plan to overwhelm the statehouse with thousands of protesters; however, Gov. Daniels has already indicated that the maximum number of people who may occupy the statehouse at any given time is 3,000.

Right-to-work supporters contend that it is unfair to force workers, many of whom are unwilling, to contribute financially to unions. Those on the other end of the spectrum, however, claim that if all workers were not compelled to financially support the unions, then there would be too many free riders who would enjoy the benefits of the union without paying.

Corporations view such [right-to-work] laws as an important sign that a state has policies friendly to business, noted the *New York Times* Steven Greenhouse. Labor leaders say that allowing workers to opt out of paying any money to the union that represents them weakens unions finances, bargaining clout and political power.

To that, critics assert that if the unions are interested in maintaining members and their bargaining power, it would be their responsibility to provide a valuable service in order to encourage workers to maintain their union membership.

Debate surrounding the legislation rests on a number of factors. Though Indiana once led the nation in wages, for instance, it is now well below the national average. Opponents of the legislation contend that wages would continue to go down if the bill were passed. But supporters of the measure point out that the decline in wages occurred in the absence of right-to-work legislation, and that the bill would at least bring jobs to Indiana, which in turn would eventually force wages to rise.

Indianas Senate President Pro Tem David Long contends that the bill is entirely necessary to stimulate Indianas jobs growth. Indiana loses up to 50 percent of its job opportunities to right-to-work states. We have done a phenomenal job of growing our economy, but in a tough global economy, its not enough, he avers.



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John Sampson confirms that there is indeed some truth to Long's assertions. As the president and CEO of the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership, Sampson notes that a large company recently announced the building of a \$700-million plant in South Carolina which will employ hundreds of people. That company, he says, refused to even consider Indiana because it is not yet a right-to-work state. That's work we should have been competing for, he declares.

Indiana House Republican speaker Brian Bosma made similar observations in an interview:

Local economic development officers testified that 25 to 50 percent of companies looking to create employment, whether through expansion or locating a new facility, just took Indiana and other non-right-to-work states off the table. This is stopping employers from coming to Indiana. We need to deal with that.

Recently the Boeing company attempted to move to South Carolina a right-to-work state provoking the National Labor Relations Board to file a complaint which would have compelled the aerospace giant to remain in Washington. The battle was eventually resolved when Boeing agreed to extend its contract with labor groups in Washington to 2016 and to allow its 737 Max airplane to be built on the West Coast.

Many employers wish to set up businesses in the 22 right-to-work states in the nation because they are able to save costs in doing so, and are permitted to operate with greater flexibility because of the weakened role of unions. Likewise, right-to-work states are attractive to employees who are happy not to be forced to pay union dues.

But Indiana State Rep. Win Moses claims that if the legislation is passed in Indiana, workers would actually suffer pay cuts. Indiana is 11 percent union, but it's clear to me the wages of the other 89 percent will go down too, with right to work, he insisted.

Jim Robinson, an official at the United Steelworkers in Indiana, is accusing Republicans of exacting vengeance on their biggest opponents. It's a political attack on what the Republicans see as one of their main opponents organized labor. They want to weaken unions to help assure continued Republican majorities.

Ironically, however, Robinson's statement neglects one of the prime arguments against forced union dues. Unions are some of the largest contributors to Democratic campaigns, and a number of workers are uncomfortable with the knowledge that they are indirectly funding the campaigns of politicians whom they may not support. Likewise, a number of unions are advancing increasingly radical agendas, funded by workers, many of whom may not support those agendas.

But those assertions seem to ignore the obvious benefits on labor that right-to-work legislation creates. Some people will say this is about bashing organized labor, John Sampson stated. From my point of view, there's nothing better for labor than to create increased demand for jobs.

This is the second year in a row in which Indiana will be witnessing the right-to-work battle. Democrats drew particularly negative attention to the fray when they exited Indianapolis and took refuge in Urbana, Illinois, in order to avoid the vote. We passed an anti-bolting' bill last session, and polls show the people rejected what the other side did, declared Senate President Pro Tem David Long, referring to Democrats' quorum-killing and ultimately successful decision to hole up in Urbana's Comfort Suites hotel for five weeks.

According to Moses, Democrats do not intend to utilize the same tactic this year. This year, everybody



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understands it. We had 1,000 people [opposing the bill] at the Statehouse this week, he added.

But not everyone has ruled out that possibility. House Minority Leader Patrick Bauer has declined to answer whether Democrats will once again walk out on this legislation. We don't have to make plans to do that," he commented. "We have to react to what they're doing.

Democrats such as Moses received considerable fines last year for going AWOL, and this year, the cost of walking out could be up to \$1,000 a day.

Republicans have applauded Governor Daniels' efforts to make Indiana a right-to-work state, and his overall pro-business policies.

His actions in cancelling collective bargaining have led a number of Republican governors to attempt the same thing, observed Darrell West, vice president and director of governance studies for the Brookings Institution.

Overall, Senate President Pro Tem David Long contends that the bill does not have to be treated like poison by the unions: Several right-to-work states have a higher percentage of unions than non right-to-work states, he pointed out.



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