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RIGHT TO WORK LAWS ARE **ALL**
WRONG

They create
more inequality.

Not more jobs.



Right to Work laws can only create more inequality—never more jobs

What are Right to Work laws?

Contrary to what the name suggests, Right to Work laws have nothing to do with the right to paid employment. Instead, what they really do is make it easier for corporations to drive down wages for all workers. That's why those who've seen what they do call them "Right to Work for Less" laws.

Who's pushing Right to Work?

Wealthy corporations, their so-called think tanks and their political allies are pushing for Right to Work laws in Canada. In a closed-door meeting last year with federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty, CEOs earning in the millions demanded Right to Work laws so it would be easier for them to cut the wages of average workers. Political allies of corporations in Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta have also called for Right to Work laws.

How do Right to Work laws affect wages, benefits and pensions?

Right to Work laws lower the standard of living for all workers. A 2011 study found that wages in Right to Work states in the U.S. were an average of \$1,500/year lower, there were 2.6% fewer employer-sponsored health insurance plans and 4.8% fewer pension plans.

How do Right to Work laws affect jobs?

Right to Work laws don't create jobs. In the U.S, 'Right to Work' states like Nevada, Mississippi and South Carolina, had some of the highest levels of unemployment in 2012. Some states, like Oklahoma, lost jobs after adopting Right to Work laws. Many corporations that moved plants to Right to Work states to exploit workers by paying low wages have since moved those plants to China, Mexico or Vietnam.

How do Right to Work laws affect workers' choices and rights?

Unions only exist when a majority of workers in a workplace vote in favour of joining a union. In Canada, labour laws still allow individuals to opt out of being a member of the union - but the law requires them to still pay union dues. That's because people who aren't union members benefit when the union negotiates a pay increase or better working conditions. This allows the majority to have a union, while protecting an individual's right to opt out.

Right to Work laws flip this arrangement upside down. They allow people to receive all the benefits of belonging to a union without paying any dues. Under Right to Work laws, there's no legal requirement for individuals who opt out of union membership to pay union dues. Unions still have to represent non-members who don't pay dues. And non-members still receive improvements in pay or working conditions that unions negotiate.

Right to Work laws are not about choice. They're really about weakening unions by starving them of funding.

How do Right to Work laws affect the middle class?

Right to Work laws shrink the middle class. Wealthy corporations like General Electric and Toyota, want to pay \$13/hour for jobs that once paid middle class wages. Right to Work laws make it easier for these corporations to drive wages down to the point where workers struggle to get by. In fact, eight of the 10 poorest American states have Right to Work laws.

How have Right to Work laws affected workers without unions?

In the U.S, non-union workers in Right to Work states have lower average wages than non-union workers in other states. When it comes to things like health insurance and pensions, non-union workers are hurt more by Right to Work laws than unionized workers. And, Right to Work laws make it harder for people who are being treated unfairly at work to form a union and get some protection.

So why do some politicians support Right to Work laws?

No matter how many times they are proven wrong, some politicians cling to the idea that the only way to attract jobs and investment is to have lower wages, lower taxes, less environmental protection, weaker financial regulation and more tax subsidies for corporations.

Of course, soon everyone takes the same approach and it turns into a race to the bottom. For wealthy corporations and their CEOs, cutthroat competition between countries, provinces, states and cities means lower costs and massive profits. For the other 99% of us it means: lower wages; paying for subsidies and tax cuts for corporations; and going without the public services we need because governments tell us we can no longer afford them.

Is there a link between Right to Work laws and job creation?

No. Right to Work studies never consider how public spending on things like education, health care or infrastructure help create good jobs in both the public and private sectors. They never consider the impact of natural resources or technological developments on job creation and economic development.

Unbiased studies that do account for other economic factors found no link between Right to Work laws and job creation. For example, unbiased studies found that low unemployment rates in North Dakota are linked to a boom in the oil industry, not Right to Work laws.

Can we stop the race to the bottom?

Unions and their allies have fought and won tough battles before: universal health care; public education; minimum wage; public pensions; unemployment insurance; civil rights; safe workplaces and pay equity. All of these things improved the quality of life for all Canadians. We fought for these things against long odds and won.

We're at the same point today with Right to Work laws. Losing means all but a handful of Canadians will see their living standards drop. That's why we aren't just fighting to win – we're fighting to strengthen labour rights for everyone so we can build a Canada that works for more than the 1%.



How you can help fight **Right to Work** laws?

Order a copy of NUPGE's "Primer on Right to Work Laws" and learn about the hidden agenda behind these laws. Download a copy at: www.nupge.ca or order one by email: national@nupge.ca.

Learn more and take action by getting involved in these campaigns and groups.

All Together Now! Campaign:
alltogethernow.nupge.ca



Canadian Foundation for Labour Rights: labourrights.ca



**Canadian Foundation
for Labour Rights**

Labour rights are human rights



**national
union**

NATIONAL UNION OF PUBLIC AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES

- B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union
- Health Sciences Association of British Columbia
- Health Sciences Association of Alberta
- Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union
- Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union
- Canadian Union of Brewery and General Workers
- New Brunswick Union of Public and Private Employees
- Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
- PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
- Newfoundland & Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees

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The National Union of Public and General Employees is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and a member of the Public Services International.

