

Maryland House of Delegates  
Economic Matters Committee  
Chair: Dereck E. Davis  
Vice Chair: Kathleen M. Dumais

**OPPOSE**

HB 163 – Labor & Employment-Labor Organizations-Right to Work

Heat and Frost Insulators & Allied Workers Local 24  
901 Montgomery St  
Laurel, MD 20707  
(301) 725-2400  
[brian.cavey@insulators24.org](mailto:brian.cavey@insulators24.org)

Chairman Davis, Vice Chairman Dumais, members of the committee, I respectfully submit this document on behalf of the officers and members of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers Local 24 in Opposition to HB 163 - Right to Work

According to the Legal Defense Foundation, right-to-work laws prohibit union security agreements, or agreements between employers and labor unions, that govern the extent to which an established union can require employees' membership, payment of union dues, or fees as a condition of employment, either before or after hiring. Right-to-work laws do not aim to provide general guarantee of employment to people seeking work, but rather are a government ban on contractual agreements between employers and union employees requiring workers to pay for the costs of union representation.

Many argue that the Taft-Hartley Act is the original "right-to-work" law because it ensures that prospective employees cannot be barred from employment if they choose not to belong to a union. Therefore, the right to work is not an issue. The true bone of contention in the right-to-work debate is whether non-union employees should be forced to pay fees for some union activity, such as collective bargaining and union protection, from which they may benefit.

Taft-Hartley requires that all employees at a company must receive the same benefits of union activity whether or not they belong to the union. For example, if a union negotiates a pay raise for its members, the employer must give the same pay raise to its non-union employees. In many industries, non-union employees are required to pay an "agency fee" as compensation for the union benefits ensured by Taft-Hartley. However, they are not required to pay for the union's political activities—fees that are included in the regular dues for union members.

In the current political climate, right-to-work laws aim to bar employers or unions from requiring payment of any union-related fees from non-union employees. Supporters of the laws argue that requiring payments inhibits economic growth and can make some companies or industries less attractive to prospective employees. Opponents of right-to-work laws affirm that it's unfair for non-union employees to reap the benefits of union activity without paying fees, while their fellow employees who belong to the union support that same activity with their union dues.

On a larger political level, it is argued that right-to-work laws diminish the influence and financial power of unions and therefore the unions can provide less support for political candidates and initiatives. Because unions typically support Democratic politicians, many believe that right-to-work laws (which are typically backed by Republicans) are aimed at weakening support for Democrats, particularly at the state level.

The real purpose of right to work laws is to tilt the balance toward big corporations and further rig 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. As the great Martin Luther King, Jr said "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as 'right to work.' It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. Its purpose is to destroy labor unions and collective bargaining".

Sincerely,  
Brian S Cavey, Business Manager