



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321  
Labor and Employment - Right to Work  
March 5, 2021

To: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee

From: Shannon Opfer, President CWA Maryland State Council, President CWA Local 2107

Chair Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

Right to Work is Wrong for Maryland! Right to Work laws have nothing to do with a person's right to work and everything to do with destroying people's ability to organize and undermining a Union's bargaining power. Research shows Right to Work laws have no positive impact on job growth.

On average, wages in Right to Work states are 12% lower than wages in states without Right to Work laws. Obviously this lowers the Median household income. Less money in households in a state means less money being spent in that state.

Right to Work states tend to have lower rates of health insurance coverage as well, which can lead to the state being responsible for more families with no health insurance. Right to Work states have a 36% higher than average number of discrimination charges filed with the EEOC.

Right to work is really saying you have the right to work for less. Please stand with Labor and stand against Right to Work. We, the members and officers of the Communications Workers of America stand in **STRONG OPPOSITION** to this bill.

Shannon J Opfer

President CWA Maryland State Council  
President CWA Local 2107



Communications  
Workers of America  
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### TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321

#### Labor and Employment - (So-called) Right-To-Work Bill

March 5th, 2021

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and Members of the House Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Marilyn Irwin, President, CWA Local 2108

I regret that I am unable to attend your hearing about HB 1321 in person, due to the pandemic, to express my **STRONG** opposition to HB 1321. The term "Right to Work" is nothing but clever branding. It is misleading, as Right to Work laws do nothing to increase workers' chances of finding a job, keeping a job or being paid fairly for performing it, and it definitely doesn't create a right to a job for anyone.

What so-called Right to Work (RTW) laws DO is:

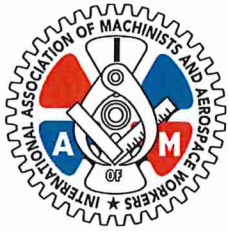
- Weaken workers' ability to stand together in order to maintain and strengthen workplace safety and health standards, resulting in a 58% higher rate of workplace deaths in states with RTW laws.
- Increase the average number of discrimination charges filed with the EEOC by 36%
- Increase the chances of your minimum wage being stuck at \$7.25/hour, as 19 out of the 21 states with a \$7.25 min. wage are "RTW states".
- Increase the pay gap between men and women, as 12 of the 15 states with the worst such gap are "RTW states".
- Decrease your pay approximately \$7500/year compared with "non-RTW states"

Proponents of RTW laws claim to be protecting workers against being forced to join a union. **The reality is that federal law already makes it illegal to force a worker to join a union!** I've represented many workers who have chosen not to join our union as a member, and instead to pay "equivalent dues". Every single one of them expressed how thankful they were to have a union on their side when they lost their jobs or were suspended without pay.

It is unfair and unreasonable to expect unions to be able to do our work if those who benefit from our bargaining and representation don't share in the cost. This is a thinly-veiled attempt by Big Business to bankrupt unions, in order to keep pay, benefits and oversight at a minimum for their workers. I haven't met Mr. Novotny yet, but as a fellow Howard County resident I must say that the residents of our great county and our great state deserve better than this legislation. I'm disappointed that this Bill is what he has chosen to champion during his first two months in office.

Sincerely,

President



## HB 1321 - UNFAVORABLE

Rick Compher

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

brjcompher@yahoo.com | (410) 487-6919

## HB 1321 - UNFAVORABLE

### Labor and Employment – Right to Work

Economic Matters Committee

March 5, 2021

To the Honorable Chairman Dereck E. Davis and Distinguished Members

My name is Rick Compher and I am the District 4 Directing Business Representative for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, headquartered in Maryland. We are one of the largest industrial and most diverse unions in the country representing aerospace, transportation, manufacturing and public and private sector employees.

**I am submitting testimony in opposition of HB 1321 – the Right to Work legislation** and I ask that you give an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT** on this bill.

Right to Work is wrong. It strips all workers of our fundamental right to join together to have a meaningful voice in the workplace. It lowers wages for all families. It makes work places unsafe for all workers. Right to Work is wrong, and hurts our economy. Everyone who lives in Right to Work states make up to \$5,000 less per year than workers who do the same job in Non-Right to Work states. Even the National Right to Work Committee stated that, “We’re not purporting to prove that right-to-work produces superior economic performance.”

Right to work is an attack on all working families, both union and non-union. It is an attempt by Wall Street billionaires and political extremists to strip our freedoms in order to line their pockets. These same people are moving workers into part-time positions, off-shoring profits, shipping our jobs to countries with subpar working conditions, and support gutting laws that protect our health and safety on the job. Right to Work is about taking our freedoms so that the wealthiest people in the nation can further maximize profits.

Right to work is also a distraction from what the people of Maryland sent their elected officials to Annapolis to do: balance the budget, create good jobs, and healthy communities, not play political games with unnecessary and deceptive Right to Work legislation.

The title of this bill is a misnomer and what it does is actually prevent workers from enjoying collective bargaining that would provide workers with stability, seniority and assurances of respect and dignity on the job.

For these reasons, we would ask this committee to oppose H.B. 1321 “Right to Work” bill and give it an **UNFAVORABLE REPORT**.

Thank you,

Rick Compher  
District 4, DBR

RC:mls

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321  
Labor and Employment – Right to Work  
March 5th, 2020

To: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee  
From: James Gilchrist, Political Coordinator - IATSE Local 487

I write today in strong opposition to HB 1321, Right to Work.

Proponents of right to work laws would have you believe that those laws increase workers' access to jobs with higher wages or even a right to a job. Sadly, that's not the case. Workers in right to work states are paid less and have fewer protections of all sorts in the workplace. This gives an overwhelming advantage to employers in so-called right to work states. Laws at the state level to "protect" workers from being forced to join a union are redundant since federal law already prohibits forcing workers to join a union.

Right to work laws also prohibit contracts that require every worker to pay the costs incurred by collective bargaining units to help pay for those benefits. Dues paying union members end up paying for non-paying workers, a burden to those willing to pay their fair share.

As a union member in good standing for the last 38 years I have benefitted far more than the value of the dues I have paid, both in the workplace and beyond. I have received workplace safety training, first aid and CPR/AED training, anti-harassment awareness and craft-specific skill training. This training would not have been possible without my union membership. My union membership also give me and my fellow members a collective voice in government at all levels and supposed right to work laws would diminish that voice by discouraging the civic engagement union membership helps to foster.

For these reasons among others, I strongly oppose HB 1321 and ask that the committee vote unfavorably on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Gilchrist', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James Gilchrist

Political Coordinator

IATSE Local 487 Mid-Atlantic Studio Mechanics and Broadcast Technicians

## Mid Atlantic Studio Mechanics and Broadcast Technicians

I.A.T.S.E. Local 487

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### TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION to HB 1321

#### Labor and Employment - Right to Work

**MARCH 5, 2020**



**Edward Hohman**  
*President*

**Paul Thomas**  
*Vice President*  
*Southern Region*

**Michael Key**  
*Vice President*  
*Northern Region*

**Ellen Popiel**  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

**David M. O'Ferrall**  
*Business Agent*

TO: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters Committee  
FROM: David M. O'Ferrall, Business Agent

Passage of this Bill would cost the State of Maryland far more than it could create. In the past when we have appeared before legislative committees we have spoken of good wages and health and retirement benefits for Maryland's working families which are the direct result of collective bargaining. By enacting this Legislation all the momentum in generating good jobs would be damaged and it will create an atmosphere which only promotes lower wages and benefits.

Numerous studies have found that wages for both union and non-union workers are lower in states with right-to-work laws. A study by the Economic Policy Institute found that wages are 3.2% lower in right-to-work states and benefits are 2.6% lower. These numbers may seem small but when you consider what this means to most families it takes on a much greater significance. As the cost of living and healthcare continue to rise do we really want to create an atmosphere which could take away what so many have fought for over the years?

While this Bill does not eliminate unions, it goes a long way toward weakening them. Unions have made sure that the working men, women and kin are treated fairly and with respect. Unions bargain with employers on the employee's behalf; by allowing employees to enjoy the fruits of that bargaining on the backs of those who pay dues is patently unfair. By reducing union membership you lessen their ability to bargain and, in doing so, harm union and non-union employees alike. As the Economic Policy Institute report points out "Where unions are strong, compensation increases even for workers not covered by any union contract, as nonunion employers face competitive pressure to match union standards." Do we really want to be known as a state where you have the "right-to-work-for less"?

Passage of this Bill is about supporting Corporations not job creation – By opposing this Bill you are supporting the working men, women and kin of Maryland who rely upon the work of Unions to support themselves and their families. This is about health and retirement benefits for adults and children. Thousands of lives can be affected for the better opposing this bill.

We, the members of Local 487, IATSE respectfully request that you give this Bill an **unfavorable vote**.



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1321 Labor and Employment – Right to Work  
March 5th, 2020

To: Hon. Dereck Davis, Chair, and members of the House Economic Matters  
Committee

From: Suzanne Herbert-Forton, Vice President TWU Local 913 I.A.T.S.E.

Dear Chairman Davis and members of the House Economic Matters Committee,

I am writing to express my opposition to HB1321, which is described as ‘right to work’ legislation. This legislation is partially described as “Prohibiting an employer from requiring, as a condition of employment or continued employment, an employee or a prospective employee, under certain circumstances, to join or remain a member of a labor organization, pay charges to a labor organization, or pay a certain amount to a third party”.

Under federal law, employees cannot be required to join a union as a condition of employment. Unions are additionally required to equally represent all the employees working under their jurisdiction, regardless of union membership.

I have spent a career in the theater industry. It is a business with a standard six day work week. The hours can be long and demanding. The presence of union representation in this industry provides strong protections for employees’ wages, hours and working conditions. The presence of union representation has personally made all the difference in my own ability to earn a living wage along with benefits; in a job that I love. Those benefits include a retirement annuity and health benefits.

I am proud of the fact that our local has provided the protections and benefits of a union contract for all who have worked in our jurisdiction. Over the years, we have gained new members from employees who began working with our local, who have appreciated the benefits that unions provide.

In the case of the theater industry, it is standard practice for all employees to pay a very small percentage in work dues. These monies cover the basic administrative costs of union locals. Union locals are required to file annual reports with the Department of Labor to account for how these funds are spent.

“Right to work” is a misnomer. As I noted in my opening, it is against Federal law to require an employee to join a union. It is incumbent on unions to equally represent all employees under their jurisdiction. Unions provide employees with the backing needed to protect wages, benefits, hours and working conditions. This legislation would weaken the ability of unions to provide these protections to workers. It would open the door to weakening workers rights.

I respectfully ask that the committee oppose this legislation.

Suzanne Herbert-Forton,  
Vice President, TWU Local 913, I.A.T.S.E.