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March 5, 2021

TO: The Honorable Dereck E. Davis
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

FROM: The Office of the Attorney General

RE: HB1321 – Labor and Employment - Right to Work – **Letter of Opposition**

The Office of the Attorney General urges an unfavorable report of House Bill 1321. Contrary to the name, the right-to-work is a misleading title. The proposed legislation does not guarantee a job for anyone. In fact, the proposed legislation makes it illegal for employers to require employees from joining their colleagues, unionized workers. And this restriction promotes inequality.¹

The proposed legislation promotes inequality because right-to-work laws are associated with “significantly lower wages and reduce[] chances of receiving employer-sponsored health insurance and pensions[.]”² Contrary to its positive sounding change, the right-to-work laws “in reality . . . [force] workers . . . to work for lower wages and fewer benefits.”³ In contrast, “strong labor unions reduce economic inequality.”⁴ Joining a labor union “raise wages for all but the highest income earners, with effects particularly pronounced for blue-collar workers, less skilled workers, and less educated workers.”⁵ Thus, to promote equality between highest income earners and employees, we urge the Committee to oppose HB 1321.

¹ See Tom VanHeuvelen, *The Right to Work, Power Resources, and Economic Inequality*, AM. J. OF SOCIO. 38 (forthcoming 2020), <https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/7qb56/download> (“[W]eakening of labor power result in high growth of inequality.”).

² Elise Gould & Heidi Shierholz, *The Compensation Penalty Of “Right-To-Work” Laws*, ECON. POL’Y INST., Feb. 17, 2011, at 9.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Tom VanHeuvelen, *supra* note 1, at 6.

⁵ *Id.* (internal citations omitted).

For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges an unfavorable report of House Bill 1321.

cc: Members of the Economic Matters Committee