

Testimony of Jace White
Director of Federal Affairs, National Right to Work Committee
Before the Maryland House Economic Matters Committee
On House Bill 494
February 14, 2023

Chairman Wilson, members of the committee, my name is Jace White, and I am the Director of Federal Affairs at the National Right to Work Committee.

On behalf of our tens of thousands of members and supporters in Maryland, I am here to speak in support of HB 494 and the freedom of association that it advances.

This bill would protect every individual from being compelled to pay union dues or fees in order to work for a living, finally making Maryland the 28th Right to Work state.

Unfortunately, under current law in Maryland, a union boss can choose to impose monopoly bargaining on workers, taking away an individual's right to negotiate for him or herself.

Then, union bosses demand the government-enforced authority to extract dues or "fees" from those unconsenting workers, adding insult to injury.

That is just wrong.

This bill would guarantee workers the right to decide for themselves whether or not a labor union deserves their financial support, as they can for any other private organization.

Once, when Fred Comer, the former Executive Director of the Iowa State Education Association was asked if he would support a controversial resolution at a national union convention, he said,

"Hell no, we don't support it! Iowa is a Right to Work state. We have to earn our membership. If we supported that, we'd lose too many members."

You see, without Right to Work protections, there is little incentive for union officials to offer a good service to their members -- because they can compel people to pay them either way.

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The fact is, good unions don't need forced dues, and bad unions don't deserve them.

Furthermore, it is clear that Right to Work would help Maryland's economic outlook.

From 2010 to 2020, the percentage growth in number of people employed was 4.3% in Maryland, and 2.4% in all forced-unionism states. Right to Work states, on the other hand, enjoyed employment growth of 11% -- more than double Maryland's.

That's no surprise, because as PHH Fantus found and others have confirmed, roughly half of businesses automatically rule out relocating or expanding to states that lack a Right to Work law.

Furthermore, residents of Right to Work states earn nearly \$3,000 more in average cost-of-living-adjusted household income per year.

Clearly, not only is Right to Work the morally right thing to do, but protecting this freedom will also help Maryland's workers and economy.

Therefore, I urge all of you to vote to advance HB 494.