



PLUMBERS AND STEAMFITTERS

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Founded 1889

Maryland House- Economic Matters

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House Bill 494

Why were "right to work" laws originally adopted?

The Depression years of the 1930s saw a dramatic upsurge in union organizing, formalized by the passage of the **National Labor Relations Act in 1935**. Threatened by workers' mobilizations, an industry lobbyist named **Vance Muse** promoted the term "right to work" in 1936 to describe restrictions on union activity. An associate of the Ku Klux Klan, Muse saw unionization not only as a threat to employers' high rate of profitability but also to the white supremacist order of the Jim Crow South. As labor organizers sought to bring working people together across racial lines, Muse warned that without "right to work" legislation to impede union organizing, "white women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes whom they will have to call 'brother' or lose their jobs. Preying on the ugliest racial enmity, Muse's organization advanced "right to work" aggressively in the segregated South, with Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia among the first states to adopt the anti-worker laws. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. saw the same connection between "right to work" laws and the denial of racial equity continuing to operate in the 1960s. In a successful 1964 campaign against a "right to work" ballot initiative in Oklahoma, he wrote, "In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as "right to work" It provides no rights and no work." It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights. It is supported by Southern segregationists who are trying to keep us from achieving our Civil Rights and our right of equal job opportunity... wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer, and there are no Civil Rights. I think that any Bills' whose origins are steeped in Racial Hatred and Segregation has no place in the legislative process of the Maryland General Assembly.

P.S. I am in no way suggesting that the sponsors of this bill are congruent with the ideology of the degenerate political operative **Vance Muse**.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gerald W. Jackson – Assistant Business Manager Plumbers & Steamfitter's UA Local Union No. 486
Secretary- Treasurer, Maryland State & D.C. AFL-CIO