



Should Right to Work Laws be Legal?

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If ever a law was mislabeled, it is the Right to Work legislation. This anti-union contagion has spread through state legislatures like an ever growing fungus (witness Wisconsin). Pro-business conservative nabobs are making the argument that more business means more jobs and Right to Work laws promote business development or relocation.

Three economists, Stephen Moore, Arthur B. Laffer and Joel Griffith, make the argument in favor of RTW laws in [an article published online by the Heritage foundation](#). Their abstract sums up the thesis.

Every day in America the 50 states compete against each other for people, jobs, investment capital, and overall prosperity. This interstate competition is economically healthy because it forces governors and legislators to adopt fiscal and regulatory policies that maximize job opportunities and prosperity for their citizens. Right-to-work laws and low income taxes are the two policies that matter most in terms of the prosperity of states. If every state were to adopt the pro-growth policies recommended in this study, each state and the nation as a

whole would be better off.

It isn't hard to find corporate tax dodgers moving from one state to another. Nor is it hard to see transplanted corporations hiring employees willing to accept lower compensation. On a broader scale, NAFTA has given corporations access to entire countries willing to accept low wages and benefits. The RTW farce has allowed business to do the same domestically.

Enticed by better business environments, created by elected officials, a company can leave one location and layoff its workforce, only to reappear in another location and hire people for less than they are worth. Business benefits, but the workers left behind and those newly hired at lower wages, do not.

In effect, businesses can shop around the country and pit one community against another, offering tax incentives and desperate labor forces as enticements. Elected officials are judging that more low paying jobs are better than fewer good paying jobs. They are peddling their states and communities to organizations whose primary objective is to make a profit, for themselves not the community.

A survey by CNBC, a business first network, [shows America's top states to live in](#). Among the top ten, only Iowa (tied for #9) was a RTW state. Other top ten rankings by third parties show RTW states pale in comparison to fair share states in Education, Health Care and Income.

Moore and his fellow economists present solid evidence in promoting RTW laws and tax incentives. What they do not examine is whether RTW should be legal and what would a country absent RTW and competitive tax incentives look like? Might companies invest in a lasting commitment to a community and its workforce? Until the country has comparable business environments for companies in all communities we will continue to experience the downward drain of wages, quality of life and an elevation of business interests over the interests of the citizens.

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