



(Click on headlines for full story)

Labor leaders call LePage 'factually very uninformed'

Bangor Daily News Online
2/28/2011

"Right to work" laws are on the books in 22 states, and legislation is pending in about a dozen more, including Maine, according to Patrick Semmens, spokesman for National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation.

Semmens acknowledged that workers are not forced to join unions. But Semmens said employees often are told by union officials that membership is mandatory or are not told they can withdraw later without penalty.

But the bigger question, according to Semmens, is how meaningful "resigning" or withdrawing from a union is when the worker must continue to pay dues, is bound by the terms of the union contract and is prohibited from negotiating his own contract with an employer.

LePage: Wisconsin protests will come to Maine 'once they start reading our budget'

Lewiston Sun-Journal Online
2/28/2011

Patrick Semmens, with The National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, said that federal courts have reaffirmed a worker's right to leave a union. However, he said, those decisions have not meant that a worker's freedom of association rights are fully protected.

"In fact employees are still forced to accept union 'representation,'" Semmens wrote in an e-mail, adding that workers can't negotiate their own contract.

Pros, cons of worker rights laws

UnionLeader.com
3/06/2011

Unions and their supporters argue that the right-to-work bill is the product of an anti-union campaign led by the National Right to Work Committee, based in Virginia.

Fiscal worries, union power-grabs spark new Right-to-Work campaigns

Washington Examiner Online
3/05/2011

The logic of state Right-to-Work laws is ironclad: Not only is safeguarding worker freedom the right thing to do, it also yields tremendous economic benefits. Recent studies from the Cato Institute and the National Institute for Labor Relations Research suggest that Right-to-Work states enjoy higher job growth and more cost-of-living-adjusted disposable income for workers than their forced-unionism counterparts.

What isn't new is Americans' support for Right-to-Work. For decades, polls have shown that the public overwhelmingly agrees with the principle that union membership and dues payment should be voluntary, not forced. A recent poll even demonstrated that 80 percent of union members agree with the Right-to-Work principle, the same amount as the public at large.

Obama, Solis gut Bush-era union financial transparency regs

Washington Examiner Online
3/04/11

For one thing, union members might not have been so quick to rally behind union leaders.

“If people think you’re ripping them off, it’s hard for the people to think you’re defending them,” said Don Loos, who previously worked in the Department of Labor and now serves as senior adviser at the National Right to Work Committee.

“If people see their dues being wasted, it’s hard to think those people are also looking out for your best interest,” Loos said.

On the other hand, those unions that manage their money well would face little-to-no backlash from members. As Loos put it, “If they’re doing a great job with their money, it should enhance their credibility.”

Ron Arnold: Meet the three most powerful Big Labor bosses you never heard of

Washington Examiner Online
3/04/2011

On Election Day last year, Big Labor's bosses were aghast at spending some \$200 million on political campaigns only to see voters elect a Tea Party inspired GOP majority, toss out the Democrats' supermajority in the Senate, and elect a wave of new Republican governors across the country.

The Public Sector Premium for School Teachers

Carpediem.com
3/03/2011

The chart above is based on Department of Education data available here for the 2007-2008 school year comparing average salaries for public and private school teachers at the elementary and secondary level. Here are some interesting (shocking?) comparisons:

State Attorneys General Send Letter to NLRB Declining to Enter Confidentiality Agreement

Daily Labor Report Online
3/04/11

In the latest chapter of an ongoing dispute over the constitutionality and potential federal preemption of state “secret-ballot amendments,” the attorneys general of four states that late last year enacted such amendments sent a letter to the acting general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board March 4 declining to enter into a confidentiality agreement

Wis. governor warns unions of mass layoffs

MSNBC.com
3/4/2011

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker issued layoff warning notices on Friday to unions representing state workers as a battle intensified between Republican and Democratic lawmakers over union bargaining rights that has sparked protests and a national debate.

Unions wary of Dems' convention plans in NC

MSNBC.com
3/04/11

With the American labor movement newly energized by its most serious threat in years, the Democratic Party's decision to hold its 2012 convention in the least union-friendly state is causing friction with a key constituency.

Senate Panel Offers Continuing Resolution Without House's Cuts to Labor Agencies

Daily Labor Report Online
3/04/11

The Senate Appropriations Committee released March 4 a seven-month continuing resolution (H.R. 1) that does not include the deep cuts to the Labor Department and the National Labor Relations Board that were included in the House-passed version of the bill.

Michigan Governor Following GOP Agenda To 'Destroy Middle Class,' UAW's King Says

Daily Labor Report Online
3/04/2011

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder's (R) recent actions show he is following the "Republican agenda to destroy the middle class," raising taxes for seniors and low-income workers, taking away the bargaining rights of home-based child care providers, and giving emergency financial managers the power to end union contracts for public employees, United Auto Workers President Bob King said March 3.

Court Sets 33-Month Prison Term for Leader Of New York City School Bus Drivers Union

Daily Labor Report Online
3/04/11

NEW YORK—The former chief of a New York City union local representing school bus company employees has been sentenced to 33 months in prison for using his position to extort company owners, prosecutors announced March 3 (United States v. Annunziata, S.D.N.Y., No. 10-CR-144, sentencing 3/3/11).

Industry Groups, Organizations Target Labor-Related Regulations in Issa Letters

Daily Labor Report Online
3/04/2011

Hundreds of letters from business groups and organizations, submitted recently to a senior lawmaker, contain criticisms of regulatory initiatives by many federal agencies, including the Labor Department and the National Labor Relations Board, as being restrictive to job creation, according to a review of the letters by BNA.