

Intro

We affirm the resolution, Resolved: “In the United States, right-to-work laws do more harm than good.” We advocate against RTW laws.

Sole Contention - The Freeloader Problem

RTW laws encourage “freeloaders”, which leads to weakened unions.

A freeloader in this case is someone who receives union benefits but doesn’t contribute to union funds. **Murphy in 2012** explains that since RTW laws allow for workers to choose to join a union, they often will choose to not join since they get all the benefits from a union either way. Unfortunately, this means that these freeloaders won’t contribute to union funds.

Freeloaders harm unions because without sufficient funds, unions can’t run effectively. **McRobert in 2021** finds union funding covers strike funds, legal costs, and contract enforcement. **Eisenbrey in 2015** quantifies this, finding right to work reduces union funding by 9.6 percentage points.

Without sufficient funding, unions can’t do their job properly, leading to workers losing long-term benefits.

Combs in 2019 quantifies that unions in RTW states only had 38 strikes in 2018, compared to the 131 strikes conducted by unions in non-RTW states. RTW laws hamper union strength through membership, organizing, and unrest.

More strikes lead to more benefits. **LaborNotes in 2019** says that strikes have caused higher wages, vacations, seniority rights and more. Without strikes, working and living situations would worsen.

As a result there are four key impacts: wages, benefits, workplace conditions, and minorities.

Impact One: Lower Wages

Massenkoff in 2022 says that unions have less bargaining power when they negotiate for higher wages if they have weaker strikes, like they do in RTW states.

RTW states also create more low-paying jobs. **AFL-CIO in 2022** says that in “right to work” states, 24% of jobs are in low-wage occupations, compared to 14.5% in non-RTW states.

This has empirically led to a decrease in income for workers. **BCTGM in 2012** says that workers in RTW states make about \$5,333 a year less than other states.

\$5,000 can be the difference between paying rent or being evicted. It improves the lives of many average citizens.

Impact Two: Employee Benefits

Less powerful unions lead to less employee benefits that improve quality of life. **Green in 2022** explains that this is because unions routinely use their collective voice to place more employee benefits in bargaining contracts.

Pensions provide valuable money once an employee is retired, which can improve workers’ quality of life.

One such benefit is employee pensions. **Shierholz in 2011** says that the rate of employer-sponsored pensions is 4.8% lower in RTW states. Furthermore, if all states in the US had RTW laws, **3.8 million fewer workers** would have pensions.

Another example of a worker benefit advocated from unions is healthcare. **BCTGM in 2012** says that **21% more people lack health insurance** in RTW states compared to non RTW states, since unions are less effective in securing employer-sponsored health insurance in RTW states.

Montero in 2022 explains that **60% of uninsured people have reported skipping important treatment** due to cost, a higher rate than that of insured people.

Access to healthcare is essential to preventing the unnecessary deaths that occur more often in RTW states.

Impact Three: Workplace Conditions

Green in 2022 says that unions have been historically more successful than non-union workers at advocating for safer workplace conditions since they have a larger collective voice. When unions are weakened by RTW laws, **HHWA in 2013** quantifies the rate of workplace deaths is 52.9 percent higher in RTW states than that of non RTW states.

Workers deserve to have safe working conditions at their job and to not risk death.

Impact Four: Minorities

RTW laws also disproportionately affect minorities and women. **Gould in 2017** says that RTW laws jeopardize collective bargaining for women workers' unions. RTW laws undermine collective bargaining. Workers in right-to-work states have lower wages and fewer benefits than non-RTW states, particularly for women.

AFCSME in 2018 says that historically, marginalized communities form strong unions that fight for their rights. RTW laws weaken unions especially affecting minorities.

Weaker unions for minorities leads to less income. **EPI in 2021** explains that minority workers get a wage boost from unions, reducing racial economic disparities. Similarly, women in unionized service jobs make 52.1% more than non-unionized women in service jobs, a massive difference.

Discrimination is also worse in RTW states as **AFL-CIO in 2022** quantifies that the number of discrimination charges received from RTW states is 36% higher than the average rate.

Thus, we strongly urge an affirmative ballot.