

Sen. Vitter Joins With Other Republican Lawmakers to Advance “Right to Work” Bill

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Non-unionized states enjoy stronger economic growth



As an alternative to the agenda union officials have pursued under the Obama Administration, Sen. David Vitter (R-La.) has joined with other lawmakers to introduce legislation designed to protect against workplace discrimination.

Sen. Vitter is an original co-sponsor of Sen. James Demint’s (R-S.C.) “National Right to Work Act,” (S.504), which was formally unveiled on Tuesday. The bill does not add any new language to federal law, but does repeal five provisions in the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and the Railway Labor Act. These provisions allow for the firing of workers who refuse to pay union dues or fees to union officials, Right to Work advocates have argued.

“Traditionally, the American economy has been so exceptional because it had an innovative, flexible workforce,” Sen. Vitter observed in a press statement. “But now, big labor bosses are trying to force employees into joining unions and paying dues, which comes directly out of your hard-earned paycheck and often directed to political activities that you may not support. To see the negative impacts of forced unionization, look no further than the struggling businesses in states whose laws allow it. It can’t be a coincidence that right work states have on balance grown in population over the last 10 years, arguably at the expense of union-favoring states.”

Louisiana is one of 22 “Right to Work” states concentrated in the south and mid-west that protect the rights of employees to either join or not join a union. A recent study from the Cato Institute concluded that there is “a very strong and highly statistically significant relationship between right to work laws and economic growth.” The same study also found that 1977 to 2007 “Right to Work” states experienced a 23 percent faster rise in per capita income than the more unionized states.

During the first two years of the Obama Administration, union officials sought passage of The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), which included “card check” and binding arbitration. The legislation has stalled on Capitol Hill, but industry groups have expressed concern that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRA) could deliver policy favors to organized labor without congressional consent.

However, public sentiment remains very much on the side of greater autonomy and freedom in workplace environments, the NRTW Foundation and other free market groups point out. Polls show that 80 percent of the American people are opposed to the idea that worker should be forced into joining or paying dues to a union in order to keep their jobs.

“In an age of legislative overreach, this is one of the shortest bills ever introduced,” Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation said after Vitter, Demint and other key Senators introduced the new bill. “It [The National Right to Work Act] simply removes language in

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the National Labor Relations Act that gives union officials the power to extract dues from nonunion workers. The case for Right to Work has always rested on the principles of employee freedom, but passage of a National Right to Work law will also pay economic dividends. Studies demonstrate that Right to Work states enjoyed nearly seven percent private sector job growth over the past decade while their forced-unionism counterparts lost nearly three percent of their private sector jobs.”

Sens. Tom Coburn (Okla.), Orrin Hatch (Utah), Mike Lee (Utah), Rand Paul (Ky.), James Risch (Idaho), Pat Toomey (Pa.) are the other co-sponsors.

Kevin Mooney is an investigative reporter with the Pelican Institute for Public Policy. He can be reached at kmooney@pelicaninstitute.org and he can be followed on [Twitter](#).

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