

## COMMUNITY COMMENT: Right to work will cramp business

By Kevin Derr Special to the Courier & Press Kevin Derr is president of Derr Logistics in Boonville, Ind.

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I am the president of Derr Logistics Inc. We are a small trucking and freight management company located in Boonville, Ind., and I am opposed to making Indiana a right-to-work state.

Right-to-work legislation, if passed, would cause wages to decline without producing any gains in worker productivity and a subsequent and offsetting reduction in consumer prices. My business, like so many others, depends on the income of wage earners to drive economic activity with their purchases of goods and services. When workers' wages decline, consumer consumption decreases, the demand for my company's services declines and small business owners like me are made worse off.

Most small businesses like mine are not unionized. Right to work has no impact on my employees. It offers them or me no additional rights.

As a matter of fact, this legislation only eliminates the right of employers with a unionized workforce and their employees to negotiate freely the terms of their labor agreement.

Right-to-work status does not influence my decision to invest. The only thing that influences my investment decisions is whether or not someone is willing to buy my service and if I can profit from its sale.

According to the right-wing Cato Institute, "Average pay levels in non-right-to-work states are over 20 percent higher than in their right-to-work counterparts."

And, while Cato also argues that after implementing changes in a state's right-to-work status per-capita incomes rise, the rise in incomes is not universal. It is mostly associated with growth in income due to increased stock market prices of the stocks of the affected companies and the growth in personal income is therefore concentrated into the hands of those few equity owners.

Furthermore, from the same Cato Institute study, "where right-to-work laws do not exist, unions tend to be much stronger. No one disputes that non-right-to-work states are more unionized." This legislation is not about growing jobs. It is not about increasing workers' personal incomes. It is not about growing the economy. It is about killing unions so some employers can generate higher profits at the expense of the

wages of their workforce and the community of small businesses dependent on those wages.

The kinds of jobs that right-to-work advocates claim will come to right-to-work states are not the kind of jobs I want in my community. I want my community and the legislature representing my community focusing on improving, growing and bringing in those companies producing high value goods and services capable of providing living wage jobs with benefits which keep both the employees and their families stable, healthy and contributing members to society. We do this by making Indiana the most attractive place to invest because we have the best schools and the highest-trained and skilled workforce, the best road, river, rail and air infrastructure to move goods, customers and employees, the lowest relative energy rates, and libraries, museums, parks and recreation facilities to make our quality of life attractive, not our low wages.

I not only make a profit in and from my community, I live in my community. I want a community comprised of productive and well-paid workers with the rights and protections they deserve, the same rights and protections the Sunday school teacher taught me we all deserve.

If I wanted to work in the Third World I could, because they already have to right-to-work there.

I don't want to make my community the Third World.



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