

## **End forced unionism in NH**

**Laurie Sanborn**

IT'S A SPECIAL OCCASION when we can put New Hampshire on the map for doing something really terrific for our people. We now have that opportunity by ending forced unionism as a condition of employment.

Our newly elected governor made fixing this problem a top priority for New Hampshire by committing to passage of Right-to-Work legislation. The Senate has already passed it, and now a strong majority in the House is poised and ready to support this worthy goal. Unfortunately, the bill appears to be a partisan issue at the New Hampshire State House at the moment, but we would prefer it was not and we encourage Democrats to support this common-sense approach.

Sometimes it's hard to fathom that the "Live Free or Die" state would have forced unionism. Seems crazy, but it does today.

The bill passed by the Senate (SB 11) is identical to the House version (HB 520) and would change the existing requirement that a worker in a union shop be forced to pay the union as a condition of employment. To be clear, nothing in these bills prevents or discourages anyone from joining a union if they wish.

Republicans are not opposed to unions or voluntary union membership. Despite unwarranted claims to the contrary, Republicans are not anti-union. We are simply and emphatically pro-freedom, pro-worker, and pro-jobs for all employees, both public and private.

National Gallup polling shows 74 percent of Americans support this legislation, including 60 percent of Democrats. Here in New Hampshire, 71 percent support Right-to-Work, including 65 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of union households.

You may have never heard this from that silent majority of union employees in New Hampshire, but they are out there. Many have come to state representatives like us to confidentially share their support for Right-to-Work.

They do not believe that people should be forced to pay union dues as a requirement to be hired or to keep their job. They don't believe people should be forced to contribute or pay dues to an organization, any organization, they do not wish to belong to.

Why are they silent? Because many people who work in an organization with forced union dues fear harassment in the workplace and fear losing their jobs.

Some may say this fear is unwarranted, but people who work for the state of New Hampshire are given a Payroll Deduction Acknowledgement form to sign that says, "Please understand that as a condition of employment, you must execute a Payroll Deduction Authorization and indicate whether you wish to be a Full Member or pay an Agency Fee. A condition of employment means that your employment is contingent upon choosing whether to join the SEA or pay an agency fee and that this is a mandatory requirement for working at the agency..." Just in the past three months, we've seen three additional states pass Right-to-Work legislation, ending forced unionism and freeing thousands of workers.

States such as Indiana and Michigan that passed Right-to-Work in recent years have been able to study and document the positive results.

They have seen union participation and worker wages remain stable or increase. Impressively, they've also seen unprecedented new economic investments and job creation in their state as a result of passing Right-to-Work legislation.

In New Hampshire, we've seen our demographics change and our average age become older — in fact, we are now one of the oldest states in the nation. We've been struggling with the loss of in-migration of younger people

into our workforce for years.

According to Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, states that have passed Right-to-Work collectively gained 4.9 million people from in-migration from 2003-2012, while other states lost roughly the same amount.

A national survey by Pew Research in 2008 found jobs and economic opportunity as the primary reason people choose to relocate. For comparison, only 18 percent cited climate as a reason to move.

When New Hampshire passes Right-to-Work, we will be the only state in the entire Northeast region without forced unionism. We will become a beacon of workplace freedom and new jobs, and by doing so, we will attract young people and economic prosperity to our great state.

Rep. Laurie Sanborn is one of the tri-chairs of the New Hampshire House Republican Alliance.



## Granite State DEBATES