

Written by Jim Lakely

Wednesday, 12 December 2012 13:50

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Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder pledged to sign a bill as early as today that would make Michigan the 24th “right-to-work” state in the country. Among other things, the new law would end the requirement that workers pay union dues as a condition of employment.

The following statements from legal and economic experts at The Heartland Institute – a free-market think tank – may be used for attribution. For more comments, refer to the contact information below. To book a Heartland guest on your program, please contact Tammy Nash at tnash@heartland.org and [312/377-4000](tel:3123774000). After regular business hours, contact Jim Lakely at jlakely@heartland.org and [312/731-9364](tel:3127319364).

“This is a great victory for American workers. Now 45 percent of Americans are covered by these laws, and it is only a matter of time before the other big Midwestern states follow suit or have their lunches eaten by Indiana and Michigan.”

[Richard Vedder](#)

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“For the past 20 years, all of the top-performing states in the country have had right-to-work laws. None of the worse-performing states have had such laws. With its right-to-work law, Michigan will become one of the nation’s premier performing state economies.”

[Robert Genetski](#)

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“It’s deja vu all over again for those of us who live in Wisconsin, as taxpayers foot the bills for riot police in Lansing and paid holidays for teachers so they can protest.

“And all of the taxpayers in this country paid for the destruction to the Michigan auto industry brought to its knees by union overreaching. Despite these subsidies, GM still went through bankruptcy and has not yet recovered. Yet automakers in right-to-work states are thriving. The handwriting is on the wall; the teachers evidently can’t read.”

[Maureen Martin](#)

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Ms. Martin is a resident of rural Wisconsin.

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“Michigan is poised to open up its labor market and to discover the dynamics of a free market which has been suppressed for far too long by the political class in concert with union leaders. Monopoly power created by union shops where workers must pay union dues or lose their jobs has caused long-term injury to industry in Michigan, resulting in high unemployment and a growing underclass leading to social deterioration. As a Michigan Law School graduate, I congratulate Governor Snyder for his courage in dealing with this corrosive abuse of business and the citizens of the State of Michigan.”

[Paul Fisher](#)

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“Everyone is for the freedom of workers to choose whether or not they want to join a union, except for the unions. That is what their opposition to right-to-work means. Right-to-work only means the freedom of each worker to choose, which is central to the entire American social contract. States with right-to-work also enjoy more rapidly growing jobs, lower unemployment, more rapidly growing wages and incomes, and more economic growth. Michigan will now enjoy this too, reversing its decades-long decline.”

[Peter Ferrara](#)

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Mr. Ferrara is the author of America’s Ticking Bankruptcy Bomb (2011)

“With Michigan following Indiana, which became the first industrial Midwest state to establish right-to-work last year, we now have a virtual circle of competition between states to establish the best conditions for job-creating businesses. This will benefit workers, consumers, taxpayers, and the state governments – the latter gaining higher revenues from taxes on growing state economies. It truly is a win-win-win-win situation.”

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“This law gives workers more freedom and should make labor unions more accountable to workers.

“Workers will no longer be forced to pay into a union just to earn a living. They won’t be forced to see their money used in ways they might oppose. Labor unions will have to earn the support of workers if they want to survive. It’s long past time labor unions had to respond to workers rather than workers respond to unions.”

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“Unions, as a form of free associations, are a basic human right. In this country, unions were born in free association and were incorrectly attacked under the anti-trust laws. Unions initially rested on their ability to offer not only collective bargaining services to their members, but to provide unemployment insurance and other forms of fraternal relief before the advent of the welfare state, and to certify the quality of their members’ work and, so, enable their members to command a premium wage in the marketplace.

“Then something changed. Unions were transformed by the Wagner Act from free associations

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to extensions of the state's coercive power. Even with the moderating influence of the Taft-Hartley Act, unions evolved into something different. Although there are some notable exceptions, unions have atrophied in the private sector and have grown in the government sector. Even in the private sector, unions hang on in some industries only because of the periodic intervention of the federal government.

“In the meantime, restrictions on labor-management cooperation and on the exercise of share ownership by workers stymies the emergence of a new model for workers, in which those who sign the back of the paycheck develop their common interests with those who sign the front. Restoring the basis of unions in free association should mean that unions – and not the government – assert themselves on behalf of their members in wages, benefits, and working conditions, earning their dues from their members, and enabling their workers to earn their premium compensation packages through their greater productivity.”

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The [Heartland Institute](#) is a 28-year-old national nonprofit organization headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. Its mission is to discover, develop, and promote free-market solutions to social and economic problems. For more information, visit our [Web site](#) or call

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