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**“Right-to-work” has not worked for Wisconsin  
By Rep. Gary Hebl**

A little more than a year ago, Wisconsin became a so-called “right-to-work” state. Governor Walker stated that it would bring “prosperity” to everyone in Wisconsin. Unfortunately, one year later, we have not seen that prediction come to fruition. Wisconsin ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in job growth in 2014, the year before “right-to-work” was signed; in 2015, Wisconsin’s ranking plummeted to 38<sup>th</sup>.

In fact, in the five-plus years that Governor Walker has been in office, Wisconsin *still* has not reached the 250,000 jobs that he promised would be created in his first term. While Wisconsin remains middling among Midwestern states in job growth, Republicans in the Legislature focus not on job creation but rather on furthering a partisan agenda. Governor Walker, after first claiming he had “no interest” in “right-to-work” legislation and then dismissing it as a “distraction,” decided that he needed a feather in his cap for his now-failed presidential ambitions, and signed “right-to-work” legislation into law in March of 2015.

The legislative majority’s rhetoric does not match up with reality. Studies from the Economic Policy Institute have shown that not only do “right-to-work” laws have no “statistically significant impact whatsoever” on creating new jobs or opening new businesses, they also “are associated with significantly lower wages and reduced chances of receiving employer-sponsored health insurance and pensions.” This is the policy that the Republicans in control of Wisconsin have introduced to our state.

“Right-to-work” was and is wrong for Wisconsin workers. It interferes with private contracts and removes options for businesses and contractors. These laws make earning a living wage more difficult for workers, decrease the number of employees with health insurance and other employment benefits, and reduce consumer spending. “Right-to-work” is an intrusion in private business operations and a direct attack on working families and our middle class. In the almost 70 years after the Taft-Hartley Act allowed states to pass such laws, Wisconsin was not a “right-to-work” state. There is no evidence that not being a “right-to-work” state ever had any negative impact on the state’s business climate.

Luckily, in early April, a judge ruled that “right-to-work” violates Wisconsin’s constitution. In addition, the judge also blocked enforcement of the law. Wisconsin’s conservative Attorney General has already indicated his intent to appeal the decision. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, a circuit court judge denied a motion to allow the state to enforce the law while it is being appealed. At least for now, this is a step in the right direction.

I hope that with his presidential ambitions stalled, Governor Walker will stop posturing for deep-pocketed donors and will start to work in conjunction with all of Wisconsin’s legislators to create meaningful legislation for our citizens. We must focus on legislation that is actually going to help Wisconsin’s workers, create those jobs he promised, and move Wisconsin forward.

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