

New Michigan Right To Work Lawsuit Filed After MEA Threatens To Send Teacher To Collections For Failing To Pay Dues

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Last October [we reported](#) that the Mackinac Center had filed unfair labor practice charges with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission (MERC) against the Michigan Education Association (MEA). The MEA is the union that represents teachers throughout the State of Michigan. Those prior unfair labor practice charges alleged that teachers who wished to leave the MEA under Michigan's Right to Work law were bullied and intimidated by the MEA and that the MEA's "August window period" for leaving the Union was arbitrary and no longer valid under Michigan's Right to Work law that took effect in March 2013. The issue has now taken on a new dynamic. On Friday, Feb. 28, 2014, [the Mackinac Center announced](#) it had filed a lawsuit on behalf of a Michigan teacher in Oakland County against the MEA. The MEA has been threatening the teacher that it will turn her over to a collections agency if she does not pay her union dues. The teacher has refused to pay citing Michigan's Right to Work law. It turns out that the MEA recently admitted in a MERC hearing that it has adopted a policy to send to collections up to 8,000 teachers who are refusing to pay union dues. Curiously, the 8,000 number, if accurate, contradicts MEA's [earlier claim](#) that only 1 percent of teachers have chosen to not pay dues. It appears that "data point" is not accurate. MEA has [further admitted](#) that its position is that members can only resign during the month of August, but it is not clear that members were made aware of this fact. Clearly this issue continues to be a sticking point for the MEA. We will continue to monitor this issue as MERC and now a Michigan court are likely to issue their decisions in the coming months.

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