

WEST VIRGINIA BECOMES 26TH RIGHT-TO-WORK STATE

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West Virginia will now join 25 other states which have adopted right-to-work legislation preventing private employers from requiring workers to pay union dues as a condition of employment. West Virginia lawmakers passed the measure in early February, but Democratic Governor Earl Ray Tomblin vetoed the measure. However, on Friday, Feb. 12, the Republican-controlled West Virginia legislature overrode the Governor's veto. West Virginia's Right-to-Work law will become effective July 1 of this year. Right-to-Work laws allow employees to decide for themselves whether to join and financially support a union. In non-Right-to-Work states, union security clauses, which can force employees to join unions, are permitted. As in other states, union workers heavily protested the law, but were unable to ultimately sway legislators. Similar protest failed in both Wisconsin and Michigan, and the trend in favor of Right-to-Work laws continues to gain momentum. Other states with Right-to-Work laws are: Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming and Arizona. What is particularly remarkable about West Virginia joining the Right-to-Work state ranks is that like both Michigan and Wisconsin, West Virginia has historically been a staunch union state with a long history of union support, especially relative to the coal industry.

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