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NEWS >>

TEAMSTERS DENOUNCE STRONG-ARM TACTICS BY INDIANA REPUBLICANS TO PASS RIGHT-TO-WORK **Fines and Intimidation Lead to Passage of Destructive Legislation in Indiana House**

Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa yesterday condemned the passage of right-to-work legislation in the Indiana House of Representatives, denouncing the Republican majority's use of punitive tactics to compel Democrats to end their protest against the blatant attack on the state's working families.

Prior to the vote on Jan. 25, Democratic state representatives had been absent from eight sessions to prevent the Republican majority from achieving a quorum and forcing through the right-to-work legislation. Strong-arm tactics by the House majority, including a \$1,000 per day fine, made the Democrats' continued absence untenable.

"Is it any surprise that Indiana House Republicans would threaten their colleagues' livelihood to leverage them into a vote?" Hoffa said. "House Speaker Brian Bosma and his cohorts will resort to any underhanded tactic to force through right-to-work for less legislation for their corporate benefactors."

The legislation, which will likely be signed into law by Gov. Mitch Daniels when it reaches his desk, will open the door to the gutting of wages and benefits for Indiana's working men and women. In 2006, Gov. Daniels told the Teamsters that he opposed right-to-work when he spoke to Teamsters Local 135 in Indianapolis.

At that meeting, Gov. Daniels stated, "I'm a supporter of the labor laws we have in the state of Indiana, I'm not interested in changing any of them, not the prevalent wage laws, certainly not a right-to-work law."

On Monday, Democrats proposed an amendment to the bill that called for a statewide referendum on right-to-work. In what has become a reoccurring theme, House Republicans continued their efforts to block any attempts to engage or educate their constituency about the right-to-work legislation, defeating the amendment by a 60-40 vote along party lines.

A recent poll conducted by Peter Hart Research found that 71 percent of Hoosiers support holding a referendum on right-to-work. Indiana passed right-to-work in 1957, only to see it repealed in 1965 after public outrage with the law shifted control of the state House and Senate to the Democrats. Last year, millions of Ohioans voted to repeal Senate Bill 5, which would have stripped collective bargaining rights from nearly 400,000 public employees.

"If Gov. Daniels signs this legislation into law, he will betray the trust of men and women who helped put him in office," Hoffa said. "I have little doubt in my mind that Gov. Daniels and Indiana's Republican members of the state House and Senate will see a tremendous backlash from their constituents if right-to-work is passed. If there's one thing that we have seen this past year, it's that working men and women will rise up to challenge any legislation that threatens the welfare of their families."

Teamsters Joint Council 25 represents more than 100,000 hardworking men and women in Illinois and Indiana.