

# How Gov. Rauner hopes to end union advocacy by eliminating “fair share” and promoting “right-to-work” zones



Since entering office in January, Gov. Bruce Rauner has launched a series of attacks on labor unions, proposing schemes designed to financially starve unions in order to render the unions ineffective as advocates for working families, public education and other important causes.



His two major schemes are 1) establish so-called “right-to-work zones” around the state, and 2) eliminate “fair share” payments to unions.

Despite its misleading name, “right-to-work” does not guarantee anyone a job.

What “right-to-work” laws do is bar unions from including provisions in their collective bargaining agreements which require employees they represent to pay for services and benefits that the union provides to them, regardless of whether they choose to become union members. In Illinois these provisions are called “fair share” provisions.

As conceived by Gov. Rauner, a “right-to-work zone” would be an area, designated by a local government, in which not only would “fair share” provisions be prohibited, but school districts and other public employers would not have to bargain over wages and benefits or minimally pay wages equal to what other area employers pay (“prevailing wage”).

Those working in the zones would have no input into their compensation and legally could be paid less than ordinarily would be required by “prevailing wage” laws. In this way, under Gov. Rauner’s plan, “right-to-work” literally means “right-to-work for less.”

## Talking Points

- ▶ “right-to-work” laws aren’t fair to dues-paying members. Since the union represents everyone, everyone benefits, so everyone should share in the costs of providing these services.
- ▶ No one is forced to join a union in Illinois, but requiring that those who benefit from union representation (via contract bargaining and enforcement) pay their share for those services is fair and reasonable.
- ▶ The evidence shows “right-to-work” is wrong for working families. Researchers at the University of Illinois found that right-to-work laws reduced workers’ wages and salaries by 3.2 percent on average.
- ▶ They also found that right-to-work laws reduced the portion of workers with pension plans and health insurance by 3 and 3.5 percent, respectively.

- ▶ By undermining unions, so-called “right-to-work” laws deprive unions of resources and a deeper membership base. Also, they weaken the power a union has in bargaining to secure greater protections like just cause of employer’s discipline decisions.

## “Fair Share”

Under the law, all members of a bargaining unit, regardless of whether they have joined the union, are entitled to services from the union. They also receive the same benefits as union members.

“Fair share” refers to a payment made by a non-union member of a bargaining unit to the appropriate union. Though no one is required to join a union, non-members can be required to pay their “fair share” for the services received from the union, including contract bargaining.

## How to talk about fair share with members

It is clear that Gov. Rauner wants to eliminate fair share so that unions would have less resources, making it harder for unions like IEA to advocate for the needs of students and employees. Generally, defunding unions would inhibit the ability of IEA and other unions to effectively fight policies that hurt working families.

Fair share is a fair policy that benefits all employees (members and non-members) in a bargaining unit. The union represents all employees, union and non-union. It is fair that all who benefit from the union’s services, starting with the bargaining and enforcement of a contract, pay their share of the cost of providing those services.

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