

clearly and we believe ultimately persuasively to the American people is the fact that we want people to have the right to decide for themselves when it comes to economic association, when it comes to making determinations about their economic future and freedom, and how wrong it is to predicate the acceptance of a job on compulsory membership in a union.

Again, the quarrel is not with those who would voluntarily join such an union. That is the right of an American. But, again, we reaffirm that right in its true essence by saying, if you want to belong to a union, well and good. Join, be involved in that process. If you want to be involved politically in that union and have a portion of your earnings secured through some mechanism for union dues ultimately to go to political expression, God bless you, you should have that right. But just because you have that right does not mean you should abridge the rights of others and in some way step in and subvert their abilities, A, either to join the union or, B, once a member of the union, coercively force them to surrender a portion of their paycheck and union dues to go to political activities with which they may disagree.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that those union dues collected and used to influence policy that individuals who are members of a union may not agree with or to influence political campaigns for candidates that they may not support, that money is used all over the country. Even if you are in a right-to-work State, you are affected by forced compulsory unionism in other States. That is why we need to have a national right to work law.

Mr. HAYWORTH. Indeed, as my colleague from Virginia accurately points out, in having lived through the experience firsthand in 1996, as the number one target of boss John Sweeney and the other union bosses of the AFL-CIO, who took from their membership compulsory union dues used for the committee on political education, I can tell you, one of the real tragedies from my vantage point was not the give and take and the rough and tumble of public discourse because, as Abraham Lincoln said, the American people, once fully informed, will make the right decision. And I trust the people. No, the tragedy was this, Mr. Speaker, that that longshoreman in Maryland, or that lettuce picker in California or that assembly line worker in Michigan who knew nothing of the political dynamics of the sixth district of Arizona, who had no direct stake in the political expression of the people of the sixth district of Arizona, yet found their wages against their will imported to the State of Arizona to the tune of \$2.1 million for false television ads distorting my record. And we will see that, I dare say, again as we receive reports around the country that the same activity continues.

Again, let us stress, free and open debate is fine. If people voluntarily give of their wages, that is a time-honored tradition in the Constitution. That is something we freely welcome, freedom of speech, freedom of association.

But when that crosses to compulsory, coercive, accumulations of wealth by the labor bosses against the will of the very working people they purport to help, how sad and how cynical. And again, Mr. Speaker, amidst all the talk of campaign finance reform, there is this one fact that comes from 1996. In a Rutgers University study, it is well documented that despite the reports of some \$35 million used in an effort to influence congressional elections, the actual figures, according to the Rutgers University study were these. Between 300 million and a half a billion dollars was taken coercively from members of unions to go into political campaigns in an attempt to change control in this Congress.

How much better for our constitutional Republic had all those donations been freely given and freely accepted. How much better for the rights of workers would it be if they had the opportunity to express this most basic of freedoms, the right to associate and, indeed, the right to work regardless of the encumbrances of those who would compel them into associations with which they might disagree.

This is something that must change for freedom in its truest form to flourish, so that the give and take can be genuine, not coercive and for those who would stand for true reform to end the practice or the threat of this constitutional Republic, as some would say, being sold to the highest bidder. That is what is at stake every 2 years in our renewal and celebration of freedom at the ballot box expressed in this institution, the most basic, the most responsive designed by our founders to be a constitutional office absolutely beholden to the people. How much better it would be if the people were free to truly express their opinions, their free associations without the specter of intimidation or the specter of economic ruin for failing to belong to an organization.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his participation. I would point out that just yesterday petitions signed by more than half a million American citizens were delivered here at the Capitol from right to work supporters all across the country, urging a vote on this important legislation.

I urge my colleagues in the leadership to schedule a vote to free independent-minded workers who wish to choose for themselves whether or not to belong to a labor union or pay dues to a labor union. Let them decide for themselves by passing into law the National Right to Work Act. I hope we have the opportunity to vote on this legislation soon.

I thank the gentleman again for his participation and the majority whip the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DeLay).

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding and for his leadership on this important issue. I am pleased to have this opportunity to reiterate my strong support for the National Right to Work Act, HR 59. Unlike much of the legislation considered before this Congress, this bill expands freedom by repealing those sections of federal law that authorize compulsory unionism, laws that Congress had no constitutional authority to enact in the first place!

Since the problem of compulsory unionism was created by Congress, only Congress can solve it. While state Right to Work laws provide some modicum of worker freedom, they do not cover millions of workers on federal enclaves, in the transportation industries, or on Indian Reservations. Contrary to the claims of Right to Work opponents, this bill in no way infringes on state autonomy. I would remind my colleagues that, prior to the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, no state had a law requiring workers to join a union or pay union dues. Compulsory unionism was forced on the people and the states when Congress nationalized labor policy in 1935. It strains logic to suggest that repeal of any federal law is somehow a violation of states' rights.

I would also like to take this opportunity to emphasize that this bill does not in any way infringe on the rights of workers to voluntary join or support a labor union or any other labor organization. Nothing in HR 59 interferes with the ability of a worker to organize, strike, or support union political activity if those actions stem from a worker's choice. Furthermore, nothing in HR 59 interferes with the internal affairs of unions. All the National Right to Work Bill does is stop the federal government from forcing a worker to support a labor union against that worker's will. In a free society, the decision of whether or not to join a union should be made by the worker, not by the government.

No wonder the overwhelming majority of the American people support the National Right to Work Act, as shown both by polling results and by the many postcards and petitions my office has received asking for Congressional action on this bill.

I once again thank the gentleman from Virginia for his leadership on this bill.

Mr. DOOLITTLE. Mr. Speaker, Thomas Jefferson said, "To compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions in which he disbelieves is sinful and tyrannical."

The House of Representatives has an opportunity to hold a historic vote on legislation to repeal those provisions of Federal law which require employees to pay union dues or fees as a condition of employment. This vote is long overdue for the working men and women of this country.

Nearly 80% of Americans share in the belief that compulsory unionism violates a fundamental principle of individual liberty, the very principle upon which this Nation was founded.

Compulsory unionism basically says that workers cannot and should not decide for themselves what is in their best interest, that they need a union boss to decide for them. I can think of nothing more offensive to our core founding principles which we celebrated on the Fourth of July, a few days ago, than that principle that the working people of this country do not have the ability to decide for themselves.