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REVIEWS

Right to work

It is our position that we must protect non-unionized Indiana families with the right to work.

We support legislative bills SB333, HB1067 and parts of HB1216. These efforts would prevent union-only labor agreements like the one struck during the construction of taxpayer-supported Lucas Oil Stadium.

Any worker not paying union dues was forced to either join a union or be denied the job. How can this be right and correct under the U.S. Constitution? Qualified and vetted workers should not be prohibited from opportunity because of power politics. With the elimination of non-unionized workers, a great deal of competition for work at the stadium was eradicated. Was this a factor in the price of the stadium being \$75 million over budget?

While we naturally believe in the importance of protecting our fellow workers' rights, and ours, we do not rely on unions (as they have evolved) as the best way to accomplish this goal. After all, only 26 percent of construction workers and 33 percent of the commercial contractors in Indiana are union members. What good is protecting the elite minority only to the harm of the vast majority of Hoosier workers?

represent those of Current Publishing ownership and management.

Contrary to charges, these bills protect workers

The Pat Bauer-led House Democrats listed HB 1216 and HB 1203 as reasons for their walkout across state lines. They say HB 1216 "weakens the ability of government to ensure that tax dollars are paid to the best and most qualified workers on public works projects and that these tax dollars are spent at home."

The opposite is true. HB 1216 actually protects Hoosier taxpayers and jobs by allowing public entities to build projects based on best price and best work. This bill would reform the Indiana common wage law from the 1930s by allowing competitive bidding on projects for public schools and universities and for other local and state projects under \$1 million. This common wage law contributes to why Indiana schools cost 40 percent more to build than the national average.

Also, HB 1216 eliminates the practice of granting special union construction set asides on public projects. These have dramatically increased costs on projects such as Lucas Oil Stadium, which was \$75 million over budget and many out-of-state unemployed union workers were brought in to replace local qualified workers.

House Democrats say HB 1203 would end employee rights to join a union by secret ballot and open employees up to retaliation and firing by an employer who finds out they are trying to use their right to bargain.

The opposite is true. HB 1203 allows a secret ballot in a union-organizing effort, which would protect the worker from intimidation by employers and union operatives. This bill does not take away workers' rights to organize, which is protected by federal law.

The House Democrats should stop the verbal jujitsu. These bills protect workers and taxpayers. It is one thing to walk out; it is another thing to disguise your reasons.

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