

Wisconsin AFL-CIO: As Wisconsin legislature considers Governor Evers' budget, new study finds right-to-work states worse off on multitude of economic metrics

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(MILWAUKEE, WI, February 19, 2021) – As Wisconsin's Joint Finance Committee and Legislature debate Governor Evers' Budget Proposal, which includes the repeal of the state's so-called right-to-work law, a new report from the Illinois Economic Policy Institute and the University of Illinois finds that states with right-to-work laws have slower economic growth, lower wages, higher consumer debt, worse health outcomes, fewer apprenticeships, and lower levels of civic participation than states that do not have right-to-work laws.

[Promoting Good Jobs and a Stronger Economy How Free Collective-Bargaining States Outperform "Right-to Work" States](#) compares 20 metrics including hourly wages, health care coverage, apprenticeships and worker training, wage and economic growth, household poverty, life expectancy, infant mortality rates, voter participation and civic engagement, and consumer loan delinquency rates from 27 states that have right-to-work laws to 23 states that have collective bargaining freedom laws. The data gives researchers the ability to assess the broad societal impact of so-called right-to-work laws which attack worker rights and lower union freedoms.

"The Illinois Economic Policy Institute study presents real world data for Wisconsin legislators that showcase the negative impact right-to-work laws have on our economy," said Stephanie Bloomingdale, President of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO. "The

data reinforces the need for strong union rights to provide pathways into the middle class and lay the foundation for improved economies where workers have greater financial security, more workforce training, and improved health outcomes. Governor Evers correctly calls for the repeal of right-to-work in his 2021-23 Budget. It's time to treat workers with the dignity and respect we deserve and repeal Wisconsin's right-to-work law for the health of our economy and the health of our workforce. ”

Data was assessed over an eight-year period from the beginning of 2011 to the end of 2018. Findings include states with right-to-work laws have:

- 3% lower wages
- 5% less health insurance coverage
- 15% more people in poverty
- 26% higher consumer debt levels
- Higher rates of on-the-job fatalities
- Lower life expectancy at birth
- Less investment in apprenticeship and worker training
- Lower voter participation and civic engagement
- Slower economic growth