

RE: SB 61, prohibiting collective bargaining agreements that require employees to join a labor union.

To: Chairman Infantine and the members of the Labor, Industrial and Rehabilitative Services Committee

My name is Ed Foley and I am a retired Business Representative of Sheet Metal Workers Local 17 and a former President of the New Hampshire State Building & Construction Trades Council. I have been a Catholic for 61 years and I am also a member of the Knights of Columbus.

As a Catholic I want to lift up to the Committee the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church which not only have influenced my life but are also the reasons why this Committee should oppose SB 61, the so called "right to work" Act.

Catholic Social Teaching beginning with Pope Leo XIII's encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891, called for the protection of the weak and the poor, affirmed the dignity of work and the right to form and join unions for the protection of their just rights. Since that time there has been over 130 years of unbroken tradition within the Catholic Church supporting the rights of workers to organize unions as essential for economic justice and the dignity of the human person in the workplace.

The US Catholic Bishops in their Pastoral Letter, *Economic Justice for All*, said that the Catholic Church supports "the rights of workers to form unions or other associations to secure workers' rights to fair wages and working conditions," and teaches that "no one may deny the right to organize unions without attacking human dignity itself."

Pope St. John Paul II, in his encyclical *On Human Work*, states: "The experience of history teaches that organizations of this type (unions) are an indispensable element of social life, especially in modern industrialized societies." He went on to say that "modern unions grew up from the struggle of workers to protect their just rights ... and that thanks to the work of their unions, workers will not only have more but above all be more: in other words that they will realize their humanity more fully in every respect."

Pope Benedict XIV, in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in truth), concluded: "The repeated calls within the Church's social doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, for the promotion of workers' associations that can defend their rights must be honored today even more than in the past."

SB 61 does nothing to advance the human dignity of working people or to protect the rights of workers to organize and maintain effective unions. It is meant to keep unions

weak and ineffective all in the name of some economic benefit that might accrue. We know all too well that in the states where it has been adopted, this legislation has led to lower wages, fewer benefits for working people such as employer healthcare, more dangerous workplaces, higher infant mortality rates and higher poverty rates.

SB 61 is called the “right to work” Act but it is misnamed because it doesn’t create any new rights for working people. This law seeks to impede worker solidarity and create divisions in the workplace. It sets the economic interests of a single individual against the common good of the group as a whole.

Cardinal Blasé Cupich of the Archdiocese of Chicago observed that “history has shown that a society with a healthy, effective and responsible labor movement is a better place than one where other powerful economic interests have their way and the voices and rights of workers are diminished.”

SB 61 does nothing to enhance the dignity of working people and its sole purpose is to weaken unions so necessary to the common good of New Hampshire working families.

Members of the Committee, “right to work” is morally wrong for New Hampshire.

I call on you to vote this bill as inexpedient to legislate and ought not pass.

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