



FACT SHEET

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August 11, 2006

Right to Work States: Magnets For Young Employees

New Census Bureau Data Reveal Major Youth Out-Migration From Forced-Unionism States

Just since 2000, an estimated net total of 637,000 young Americans who are now 21-30 years old have relocated from a state in which employees may be fired for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union to a state with a Right to Work law that prohibits such unjust firings.

The sources for this estimate are age-specific population data by state for the years 2000 through 2005, released by the U.S. Census Bureau on August 4,¹ and ongoing annual Census Bureau reports on the breakdown by state of immigration from abroad.²

The National Institute for Labor Relations Research calculated its estimated net migration of 637,000 first by comparing the Census Bureau reports on the number of 15-24 year-olds in each of the 50 states and Washington, D.C., as of July 1, 2000, with the number of 20-29 year-olds as of July 1, 2005. Were it not for immigration from abroad, the 50-state and D.C. totals would be virtually the same for both years, since people who were aged 15-24 in 2000 were aged 20-29 five years later.

‘Young People Want to Go Where the Jobs Are and Where the Action Is’

However, as a consequence of immigration, the total number of 20-29 year-olds in 2005 was 40.5 million, 1.6 million more than the 38.9 million 15-24 year-olds in 2000. To control for immigration, the Institute estimated the total number of immigrants in their twenties (arriving since 2000 only) located in each state in 2005, based on that state’s share of all international immigration, as reported by the Census Bureau. The Institute next subtracted these recent immigrants from the 2005 data on residents in their twenties for each of the 50 states.

With immigration factored out, the 28 non-Right to Work states lost a net total of nearly 2.7%, or 637,000, of their young adults over the course of just five years. (See Table I for details.)

¹ See the Table “Age and Sex by State: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2005” at <http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php> on the Census Bureau web site.

² U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract*, 123rd edition (2003), p. 12; 124th edition (2004-2005), p. 11; 125th edition (2006), p. 12.

At the same time, the 21 states that had Right to Work laws throughout the 2000-2005 period enjoyed a net 4.3% increase in their young adult population due to domestic migration alone. (See Table II.) Moreover, Census Bureau data indicate that young employees continue to migrate out of non-Right to Work states for decades after they acquire their first job. Assuming the out-migration continues at the same pace in the future, by 2030 there will have been a net transfer from non-Right to Work states to Right to Work states of more than three million Americans who were 15-24 years old in 2000.

Of course, several factors influence the domestic migration patterns of young adults. Heavily rural states, whether Right to Work or non-Right to Work, have tended to suffer a net loss of young people. But youth out-migration appears to be more closely correlated with compulsory unionism than it is with any other single factor.

Of the 10 states experiencing the biggest net absolute loss of young adults between 2000 and 2005 due to domestic migration, nine are non-Right to Work states. But nine of the 10 states experiencing the biggest net absolute gains are Right to Work states.

Young people would not be far more apt to move into Right to Work states than they are to move out of them if these states weren't creating millions of good jobs with good benefits.

At the same time, when young people leave the state where they grew up after they enter the workforce, that state ought to be concerned. As Michigan population researcher William Frey recently told the *Detroit News*: "It's the future. You want to be able to capture those people and have them stay to make their future in Michigan. They're the people with the most talent, the most energy. . . . Young people want to go where the jobs are and where the action is."³

Federally-Sanctioned Forced Union Dues Have Predictable Economic Consequences

Federally-sanctioned forced union dues have predictable economic consequences. Among them are Big Labor's use of rigid work rules and cultivation of the "hate-the-boss" mentality to cement its power over employees.

Right to Work laws protect the freedom of both private- and public-sector employees to keep and hold a job without forking over dues or fees to a union that is recognized as their "exclusive" (actually, monopoly) bargaining agent.

Unless they are protected by a state Right to Work law, independent-minded employees have no power to fight back against greedy and tyrannical union bosses by withholding their financial support. And when employees have no personal freedom of choice, union bosses have little incentive to tone down their class warfare. Employees are consequently far less likely to reach their full productive potential and reap the accompanying benefits.

That's a key reason why not just young-adult migration trends, but almost every demographic and economic indicator shows that forced union dues inhibit growth.

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³ Gordon Trowbridge and Amy Lee, "Brain Drain," *Detroit News*, August 4, 2006.