



## Wisconsin: 25th Right-to-Work State

News

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Steve Miller was quoted in *SHRM* on March 9, 2015. The article “Wisconsin: 25th Right-to-Work State” discussed how right-to-work states are spreading from the South into the Midwest with Wisconsin becoming the most recent addition into the right-to-work fold.

Steve was quoted on how the signing of the legislation into law could be an important tipping point and the effects of Right-to-Work.

Union membership in Wisconsin already is on the wane, according to Steve. It dropped from 17.8 percent in 2000 to just 11.7 percent last year. Part of the drop may be due to Walker’s 2011 anti-union law, Act 10, limiting collective bargaining rights to wage inflation adjustments for most public employees.

Since Act 10 was enacted, “*The Washington Post* has estimated that the National Education Association’s state membership has dropped by a third; the American Federation of Teachers by 50 percent; and the state employees union, which at one point was 70,000 strong, has gone down by 70 percent,” Steve remarked.

“Proponents of a right-to-work state claim that such states enjoy economic benefits,” Steve said. According to data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, he noted, since 2003 “13 states with such laws increased their employment rolls by 9.5 percent—nearly 3 percent more than the national average and more than double the growth in non-right-to-work states. The American Legislative Exchange Council also estimated that personal incomes in right-to-work states grew 12 percent more than in states without right-to-work protections.”

But, Steve continued, “Opponents of right-to-work laws argue that other states that have become right-to-work states have been unable to provide any examples of economic benefits. Opponents argue that such states cannot demonstrate that businesses have expanded or located to the state because of the law, or that the overall average income per household has increased.”

Steve observed that “It may be argued that some people are overreacting to Wisconsin becoming a right-to-work state. In the end, unions are still free to organize employees. Further, Wisconsin’s legislation still allows for collective bargaining on behalf of employees. The only difference is that unions cannot coerce employees from joining.”

To read the full article, please visit [SHRM](#).

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**Steve A. Miller**

Partner

312.580.7817

Email