



30 April 2014

Dear Members of the Louisiana House,

I write in strong support of House Bill 451, legislation introduced by Rep. Alan Seabaugh that would both strengthen worker freedom and get Louisiana state government out of the business of acting as the bagman for public employee unions and their political activities. By removing the state's authority to withhold union fees and dues from a public employee's paycheck, HB 451 will stop an indefensible use of state resources and will give Louisiana public employees the freedom to decide whether or not they would like to join a union and fund political activities.

Paycheck protection laws like the one HB 451 would enact in Louisiana are currently on the books in some fashion in eight other states. Passage of HB 451 would make Louisiana the second southern state to protect workers' paychecks and this reform would do much to make Louisiana more attractive to workers and employers contemplating a move or expansion to the Pelican State.

HB 451 recognizes the right of workers to organize, but ensures that workers have freedom of association and are not forced to join and fund a union against their will. If passed, HB 451 will end the use of state resources to collect union dues via paycheck withholding. With passage of this important reform, no employee will be forced to see his or her money used to support a political cause he or she does not believe in.

If unions are providing a service to workers, then they will have no problem making the case for why workers should join and pay dues. However, research indicates that without proper safeguards, many workers are forced to give up hard earned wages against their will. A study by the Heritage Foundation found that states that passed paycheck protection laws like HB 451 saw unions spending on political campaigns and activities fall by an average by 50% after such laws were enacted. In Washington State, the Washington Education Association saw the number of members donating to the political activity fund drop from 82% to 11% following the implementation of Washington's paycheck protection law in 1992. This reveals that often the goals of the union leadership do not reflect the priorities of the workers. HB 451 would ensure that every Louisiana worker has the freedom to choose whether or not to support a union's political activities. When given a choice, it seems that many workers decide to not contribute to political activities that they were previously forced to fund against their will.

Furthermore, HB 451 saves taxpayer dollars by taking the government out of the dues collection business. No more administrative or financial resources will be used by state government to funnel money to unions that, in turn, often use that very money to work against the interests of Louisiana taxpayers. If the unions want the money, they will have to ask for it themselves.

722 12th Street N.W.

Fourth Floor

Washington, D.C.

20005

T:(202)785-0266

F:(202)785-0261

www.atr.org

In both principle and practice, HB 451 is a good bill that will expand economic freedom in Louisiana. Paycheck protection laws protect workers' rights and taxpayer dollars; as such, I strongly urge you to support HB 451.

Onward,



Grover G. Norquist
President, Americans for Tax Reform