

Don't make NH a Right-to-Work state

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Jan. 14 - To the Editor:

I am a college professor, and I have been a proud union member most of my adult life. As a young person, I put myself through school working as a secretary. For much of my student years, I was lucky to find great office jobs at local colleges. I was even luckier that my secretarial posts were union jobs - I was a member of local 2110 of the United Auto Workers, one of our country's most effective labor unions. Union membership really paid off in a dollars and sense way. Working as a part-time secretary and a full-time student, I earned a living wage and had full health coverage. I even earned retirement contributions, based on my modest salary.

The availability of decent working conditions, fair wages and health benefits had an additional, intangible but equally important, impact on my life: it allowed me to stay in school and pursue a higher degree. Eventually I received my doctorate at a top program, and, in 1999, I moved to New Hampshire to teach history at the University of New Hampshire. In my current position at UNH I am represented by our local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, which has vigorously defended our rights.

Making New Hampshire a "Right to Work" state will *not* protect workers' rights to a job. By undermining labor unions, "Right to Work" will weaken the best job security protections working people have today: a grievance procedure that requires employers to have legitimate, job-related reasons for disciplining or discharging an employee.

Thanks to labor unions, the American dream was brought within reach for me, and so many others. So-called Right to Work is a disingenuous attempt to destroy that dream for the working people of New Hampshire.

Julia Rodriguez

Durham