

**DO RIGHT-TO-WORK LAWS MATTER?
EXPLAINING THE VARIATION IN UNION DENSITY AMONG STATES**

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Abstract

Do right-to-work laws lower union density? This question is addressed with a cross-sectional model of the variation in union density among states. Control variables capture employer hostility to unions, social capital, and political ideology, so that the remaining effects of right-to-work laws are independent of state-to-state variations in social, cultural and political context. The study is unique in its use of state-level indices for employer hostility and social capital. The findings show that right-to-work laws exert a significant, negative effect on union density, with right-to-work states exhibiting union densities 6.6 percentage points lower than their otherwise identical counterparts.

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The ongoing decline of American unions has prompted speculation about the labor movement's future viability (Bennet and Kaufman; 2002; Dreazen, 2001; Rose and Chaison, 2001; Troy, 1999; 2001). In 2001, total membership density was 13.5 percent of the nonagricultural workforce, with only nine percent in the private sector (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). Since the enactment of the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act in 1935, our federal labor policy has expressly promoted collective bargaining as a means of reducing industrial conflict and promoting equality of bargaining power between employers and employees throughout the country (Kaufman, 1996). Although those policy objectives remain unchanged, levels of union influence in both regional and sectoral labor markets vary considerably and impede standardization of wages and working conditions. Indeed, one of the defining characteristics of unionization in this country is the substantial difference in density rates among states.

Recent data, for example, show that union membership in North Carolina stands at a low of 3.7 percent of the work force, while the rate peaks at 26.7 percent in New York (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). Such differences raise important questions about the nature of the U.S. labor relations system. Most fundamentally, given the presence of comprehensive legislation that imposes uniform rules of union organizing, what causes regional variations in union density? This study analyzes regional membership differentials and the implications of such variation for the continuing debate about trends in membership density.

One of the central issues in that debate is the role of right-to-work laws. The question is whether the legislative context for union organizing affects membership outcomes, or if both

density and the legal environment reflect underlying tastes for and beliefs about unions. This question is of more than academic interest. If right-to-work laws exert no independent effect on union density, the labor movement wastes its financial and political resources in opposing them. However, if right-to-work laws do tend to depress union membership rates, then organized labor acts rationally when it engages in political campaigns against right-to-work proposals, as it unsuccessfully did in the 2001 initiative in Oklahoma. Right-to-work laws cannot explain the long-term decline in union density because the number of states with right-to-work laws has not changed enough to account for it. Yet this study shows that right-to-work legislation is linked to lower levels of union density across states even after controlling for social, economic, and ideological factors. The fact that such laws indeed matter to labor organizations underscores the importance of evaluating the congruence of right-to-work statutes with federal labor policies.

With the exception of the literature about right-to-work laws, most analyses of unionization focus on national density and disregard membership levels among states. Our study begins with right-to-work as the focal legal factor affecting state union membership, and then extends the analysis to include state-specific measures of unfair labor practices, social capital, and political beliefs. Even after controlling for those factors, right-to-work laws are clearly and significantly related to lower union density, with states having such legislation exhibiting lower union density by 6.6 percentage points, *ceteris paribus*. Furthermore, the control variables also provide insights into the reasons why union density varies so markedly among states.

MODELING STATE UNION DENSITY

The overall prospects for union organizing depend upon a number of factors, including labor market and worker characteristics, the response of employers to union activity, government

regulation, the prevailing political ideology, and the social context in which the organizing occurs. Previous studies have typically adopted a national or comparative approach (e.g., Lipset and Katchanovski, 2001; Rose and Chaison, 2001), and they provide valuable insights into the causes of long-term union decline. However, some of the factors which affect union density, such as right-to-work laws, are better measured cross-sectionally. In order to simultaneously control for relevant factors and to discern their effects net of each other, we take a cross-sectional approach using states as the units of analysis. Taken together, employer opposition, right-to-work legislation, political ideology, and social capital components explain most of the state difference in union density.

Employer Opposition

An influential theory attributes union decline to the vigorous, and sometimes illegal, activity of employers to discourage unionization of their firms. Beginning with the work of Harvard law professor Paul Weiler (1983), the union opposition thesis has attracted considerable support in the industrial relations literature (Freeman and Medoff, 1984; Freeman, 1992; Weiler, 1992; Bronfenbrenner and Juravich, 1998; Rose and Chaison, 2001; Kleiner, 2001). Weiler (1983: 1778) argued in an influential article that “[p]erhaps the most remarkable phenomenon in the representation process in the past quarter-century has been an astronomical increase in unfair labor practices by employers.” According to his data, charges against employers rose from 4,472 in 1950 to 31,281 in 1980, and the National Labor Relations Board found more than a third of the charges to be meritorious. During that period, the average annual number of certification elections rose only slightly. The obvious point, Weiler concluded, was that “the explosion of

employer unfair labor practices has in fact impeded employees in their attempts to bargain collectively” (1983: 1780-81).

Despite criticisms of Weiler’s theory and methodology (*e.g.*, LaLonde and Melzer (1991)), the “rogue employer thesis” persists as an important environmental factor in analyzing union density. Recent surveys find there is a strong desire for some form of representation among nonunion workers (Freeman and Rogers, 1999), but unorganized workers may perceive that any attempt to unionize will lead to managerial intimidation and retaliation. The incentives for employers to oppose unionization include higher compensation costs and a diminution in profits, even if the firm improves its productivity (Lazear, 1998: 521-523). As a result, most employees believe that management will either make an “all-out effort” to defeat an organizing drive, or at the least will try to dissuade workers from voting for the union (Kleiner, 2001). Because sanctions under the National Labor Relations Act are insufficient to deter unlawful action, managers will engage in the “high-payoff strategy” of resistance, and the intensity of managerial opposition arguably accounts for about 40 percent of the decline in private sector union density (Kleiner, 2001: 535-36).

For these reasons, the degree of employer hostility to unions is a key explanatory variable in union penetration. Following Freeman and Medoff (1984), we use *unfair labor practice* charges as an indicator of employer opposition to unions. In order to measure union opposition within states, we compiled an index of opposition for 1980-1990 using National Labor Relations Board annual reports. This period encompassed the major postwar attrition of union membership (Masters, 1997: 44), and it thus represents a decade of aggressive reaction to labor’s collective bargaining activities. The index assumes that employer opposition arises primarily in response to organizing threats. Accordingly, we calculate a ratio of employer hostility by comparing the

number of election petitions filed in the state to the number of unfair labor practice charges filed. As Table 1 shows, the opposition index reveals substantial differences among states. In West Virginia, for example, employees and unions filed 7.65 unfair labor practice charges for every representation petition. In North Dakota, the ratio is 1.78 charges per petition. We expect that the opposition index will be negatively correlated with union density.

Legal Environment

The presence of a “right-to-work” law indicates an unfavorable legal and political environment for unions and a favorable climate for capital investment (Abraham and Voos, 2000). In Section 14(b) of the 1947 Taft-Hartley amendments to the NLRA, Congress explicitly conferred authority on states to outlaw contractual agreements requiring compulsory payment of union dues from individuals covered by the agreement. By 1985, 21 states had enacted such laws, and one state, Colorado, had a “modified” right-to-work law requiring approval of union security in a secret ballot election (Hogler and Shulman, 1999). In September 2001, Oklahoma voters approved a measure enacting a right-to-work law by a margin of 54 to 46 percent (The Oklahoman, 2001). Right-to-work is a unique and idiosyncratic feature of national labor law in that it defers to state preferences regarding labor market regulation, even though the NLRA generally pre-empts any state laws not compatible with the federal purposes (Hardin, 1992: 1654-1728).

Right-to-work legislation tended to emerge in the south and the west, where unions have less political and economic influence (Gall, 1988). Right-to-work laws thus appear to reflect union weakness and in turn to contribute to it. For this reason, unions have long insisted that right-to-work legislation hampers their ability to organize workers. In response, proponents of

such legislation make the argument that the correlation between low union density and right-to-work law is spurious because both reflect the prevalence of an anti-union ideology (for discussions, see Hogler and Shulman 1999: 928-29; Moore and Newman, 1985). This argument has made it more difficult for unions to claim that politicians are favoring management over labor if they pass right-to-work legislation. The passage of such legislation can be viewed as an example of democracy in action if it merely reflects the underlying beliefs of a majority of the electorate. Indeed, a “long-standing problem that has bedeviled the empirical literature on right-to-work and union density concerns the problem of distinguishing between the effect on union density of right-to-work laws and differences in state tastes for unions” (Moore, 1998). Our use of controls for both social attitudes and political ideology in a union density equation allows us to assess the impact of right-to-work laws net of the effects of regional differences in the ideologies and cultures which can affect unionization.

Unions and the Social Environment

An emerging body of literature addresses the prospects for revitalization of the American labor movement (*e.g.*, Turner, Katz and Hurd, 2001). One proposed strategy for renewal is based on the idea of “social movement unionism,” which focuses on higher levels of member involvement and political activism. Scholars advancing this position contend that the new strategy will be “aimed at organizing the unorganized and taking political action to strengthen union influence. The ultimate objective is to reform labor laws with new protections for workers and unions and to reform the institutions of industrial relations” (Lowell and Hurd, 2001: 23). The renewed emphasis on social aspects of unionism offers insights into the issue of regional density. If civic activism affects union participation and support, there is presumably a

relationship between “citizenship,” broadly defined, and the success of a rejuvenated labor agenda (Johnston, 2002). We use the construct of *social capital* to examine correlations between state union membership density, right to work laws, and the social context of organizing.

The notion of social capital was first deployed by James Coleman (1988) to analyze individuals’ participation in social networks. Like human capital, social capital refers to the investment in human attributes that yield a return. Unlike human capital, these attributes consist of social bonds, and the return is not necessarily pecuniary. The investment in social bonds consists of the time and effort needed to form them, and the return consists of their facilitation of individual or institutional goals. The theory is sufficiently general and elastic that it has been applied across the social sciences, but for that reason, its validity as a construct has been questioned. For example, Arrow (2000: 4) comments: “The concept of measuring social interaction may be a snare and a delusion.” Nonetheless, some dimensions of social interaction, such as union membership and political affiliation, have been used in a model of right-to-work voting behavior (Gall, 1996), and particular components of social capital are useful analytical factors.

The exact meaning of social capital tends to vary with the research purposes to which it has been put. Adler and Kwon (2002) review more than 20 studies that offer definitions of social capital. They define the term as the “goodwill” to which individuals or groups have access: “Its source lies in the structure and content of the actor’s social relations. Its effects flow from the information, influence, and solidarity it makes available to the actor” (2002: 23). That definition fits closely with the general description of social movement unionism sketched above. Goodwill can be created by social actions such as attendance at meetings and other forms of civic activism

and by social attitudes such as trust. These two methods of forming social capital — social actions and social attitudes — can affect the demand for unions in different ways.

Unions are an institutional means of forming social capital since they enable workers to achieve common goals through collective action and overcome problems of free riding (Olson, 1965). Moreover, social capital may facilitate union organizing, because workers who already have social networks may perceive unions as a vehicle through which the return from these networks can be raised. If unions and social capital are complements, as the foregoing arguments suggest, then the decline in unions over the past three decades would be expected to coincide with a decline in social capital. Putnam (2000) presents evidence that social capital has in fact declined over this period, and he associates it with the corresponding decline in unions. This line of reasoning suggests that social capital and union density are positively correlated.

Conversely, social capital and union density also may be negatively correlated. Consider, for example, the interpretation of social capital as trust. Trust among workers would be expected to increase the appeal of union organizers (Levi, 2000), but trust between workers and managers might lower workers' demand for unions. Likewise, other avenues of civic activism may provide sufficient levels of social capital. Attending town meetings, volunteering in the local school, and related kinds of participation might reduce the demand for unions because they promote a social environment characterized by trust and cooperation (*e.g.*, Putnam, 2000). Under those circumstances, high levels of social capital could dampen preferences for workplace collective action.

Thus, the overall effects of social capital on union density could therefore be positive or negative. A social capital variable to our knowledge has not been included in previous studies of union density, although beliefs in the efficacy of group as opposed to individual action could be

an important correlate of union density. In this study, we rely on Robert Putnam's (2000) influential study of social capital in the U.S. Putnam constructs a measure of social capital across the contiguous states based on responses to a variety of surveys. Fourteen indicators are used to determine a state's level of social capital, including such survey items as: "I spend a lot of time visiting friends"; "Most people can be trusted"; "Most people are honest," and attendance at public meetings, membership in social organizations, volunteer activities, and related social events. By combining these indicators into a social capital index, Putnam ranks the 48 states from a positive score of 1.71 (North Dakota) to -1.43 (Nevada) (data available online at: <http://www.bowlingalone.com/data.php3>). We utilize both the social capital index and its components in order to gain insight into the ways in which social context can affect union density. We cannot predict the sign on the social capital coefficient since it will depend upon the balance of positive and negative influences on union density.

Political Ideology

Putnam's index of state social capital does not directly measure attitudes about unions or politics. Consequently, we include a separate variable to capture political ideology. Liberal and conservative political beliefs are often taken to respectively represent positive and negative beliefs about unions and compulsory financial support (Gall, 1988; 1996). Palley (2001) uses the share of Republican votes to total votes for president in the election of 1996 as a proxy for anti-union attitudes in a cross-sectional equation on states. He finds that this variable has a significant, negative impact on union density. Lipset and Katchanovski (2001) measured preferences for social democratic values and found that they are positively correlated with union density. Such research indicates that political ideas are an important dimension of workers'

propensities for unionization and should be taken into account in assessing membership trends. Consistent with this line of research, we use the percent of voters in each state who favored the Democrats in the 2000 presidential election as a measure of political ideology (Federal Election Commission, 2000). We expect the coefficient of this variable to be positive.

Labor Market and Worker Characteristics

To construct a comprehensive model, we also included variables representing state per capita income, income inequality, income growth, industrial structure, and educational attainment. These variables control for the economic context facing unionization and right-to-work legislation, and they are often used to argue for or against unions and right-to-work laws. The method and results are discussed below.

EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Econometric Model

The dependent variable is UNION, the percent of the state's labor force which belonged to a union in 2000. The explanatory variables are ULP, the unfair labor practices index developed by Hogler & Shulman (1999); SOCK, the social capital measure constructed by Putnam (2000); RTW, a dummy variable valued at unity if the state has right-to-work laws and zero otherwise; and DEMO, the percent of voters who voted for the Democratic candidate in the last presidential election. A variety of controls for labor market and worker characteristics are also included, represented by the vector X. The units of analysis are the 48 contiguous states, i

(SOCK is not available for Hawaii and Alaska). The initial model to be estimated is then given by the equation

$$\text{UNION}_i = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{ULP}_i + \beta_2 \text{SOCK}_i + \beta_3 \text{RTW}_i + \beta_4 \text{DEMO}_i + \beta_5 X_i + e_i.$$

Descriptive statistics for dependent and explanatory variables are presented in Table 2. The correlation coefficients listed in Table 3 show an interesting set of relationships among the explanatory variables. SOCK is negatively correlated with both RTW and ULP. The strength of these correlations indicates that the social capital index is successfully capturing social attitudes and actions which favor unions. The correlations further suggest that SOCK would be positively associated with union density, but as will be shown, this is not the case net of the effects of the other explanatory variables. DEMO shows no strong relationships to the other variables except for RTW. The negative correlation between DEMO and RTW indicates that the effects of RTW on the union are legislative rather than ideological. At the same time, it is noteworthy that ULP shows no correlation with DEMO or RTW. Unfair labor practices seem to cut across the ideological and legislative spectrum even if they are correlated with social attitudes and actions. The strength of these correlations and their correspondence with our assumptions increases our confidence that the variables we are using are capturing meaningful social, ideological, and political forces that can affect union density.

The issue of simultaneity obviously arises in such regressions, where dependent and independent variables might be endogenously determined in a simultaneous system. However, Hausman Specification Tests rejected the simultaneity hypothesis for all core explanatory variables. Two Stage Least Squares (TSLS) estimates using a variety of instruments was implemented to check the robustness of Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) results; TSLS and OLS results converged consistently. The percentage of college graduates among the state's adult

population, the percentage of the labor force in manufacturing, government, and services, and several income and inequality measures were considered as both potential instruments as well as explanatory variables.

Simultaneity did arise with the measures of income inequality and per capita income as explanatory variables, but the simultaneity control provided by TSLS showed these measures to be insignificantly related to state union density. The concentration of government, services, and manufacturing employment as well as concentration of college graduates were also explored as potential explanatory variables, but were found to be insignificant. While superficially surprising, the finding is consistent with other recent empirical studies of union density (*e.g.* Palley, 2001) and reinforces the need to understand the underlying sources of varying union concentration across states.

Results

Initial OLS Regression results are shown in Table 4; again, these findings were substantively identical to those from TSLS procedures using a range of instruments. The summary statistics show that the equation is robust. Using unconventional but surprisingly revealing explanatory variables, the focal regression with only four core regressors explains 62% of state-to-state variance in union density. RTW is significant within 1%, DEMO is significant within 5%, and ULP is significant within 10%. The signs on all three variables are as expected: RTW and ULP lower union density while DEMO raises it. The social capital variable is negative, but it is difficult to interpret this result since its significance level is so low. In results from an equation which excludes the DEMO variable (not shown), SOCK is negative and significant within 10%. Because the significance of SOCK drops drastically after DEMO is

inserted into the equation, it is tempting to conclude that social capital does have an ideological component. However, Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between SOCK and DEMO is very low. Putnam's (2000) social capital index does not appear to be robust in a union density equation, perhaps because it is a composite of many different indicators of social attitudes and actions. We therefore ran additional equations using the components of SOCK. The final results of these iterations are presented in Table 5.

Our method was to leave in RTW, ULP and DEMO, and to add in each component of SOCK one by one in separate equations. This showed that the only significant component was attendance at town or school board meetings (MEETING). We then ran equations with RTW, ULP, DEMO and MEETING, and again added in each of the other components of SOCK. This type of sequential testing is akin to that prescribed by Hendry, Pagan, and Sargan (1982).

The result of this approach showed that the percent of the electorate which voted in the 1988 and 1992 presidential elections (VOTE) was the only other component of SOCK which became significant alongside MEETING. Having "served on a committee for a local organization" was also provisionally significant, but inserting VOTE removed its impact. Unsurprisingly, these two civic involvement measures are strongly positively correlated, with VOTE providing the stronger explanatory power. The final equation thus includes the VOTE and MEETING components of SOCK as well as RTW, ULP, and DEMO. Each of the explanatory variables is significant within the 5% level. The equation explains 78% of the state-to-state variation in union density. This is very high for a cross-sectional equation, particularly one with a small number of explanatory variables. The coefficients for all of the primary explanatory variables, most notably RTW, remain virtually identical in the new equation, further underlining the robustness of the results.

It appears to be the case that social actions, not social attitudes, affect union density, but their effects are mixed. VOTE is positive, implying that state populations that are more electorally active are also more likely to join a union. This finding supports the view of unions as community institutions which respond to and encourage civic activism (Johnston, 2002). However, MEETING is negative. This may be because more highly educated and affluent people are more likely to attend town and school board meetings, whereas less well educated and affluent people are more likely to join unions. Or it may be because other forms of civic activism substitute for union activism. In any case, the effects of civic activism on union density are complex. The composite measure of SOCK is itself being pulled in opposing directions by these individual component effects. As a result, their combined impact on union density via SOCK is insignificant, as noted in the initial regression discussion of Table 4.

The other core variables of interest offer intriguing insights into factors influencing unionization. Higher levels of unfair labor practices are associated with significantly lower union density, while right-to-work states also feature lower rates of unionization. These results are important because each controls for the other. Even holding employer opposition, political ideology, and civic activism constant, right-to-work laws tend to lead to lower union density in themselves. States with such legislation have 6.6 percentage point lower union densities than their otherwise identical counterparts. Similarly, greater numbers of unfair labor practices tend also to reduce unionization, even when controlling for right-to-work status and the ideological and social variables. States with demonstrated hostility towards unions have significantly lower unionization rates.

Overall, the statistical analysis reveals a complex set of relationships which influence regional union density. Our quantitative model has considerable explanatory power; it also

suggests the subtle effects of social and environmental conditions on density. To elaborate the empirical results, we offer a specific example to illustrate how different factors come into play, including a state's history, geography, and demography.

A STATE CASE STUDY

Previous work on West Virginia labor markets sheds anecdotal light on our findings (Weiler, 2001; Weiler, 2000; Weiler, 1997). The state has the highest level of unfair labor practices in the country, relatively high union density, relatively low social capital, and no right-to-work law. To account for the apparent contradiction between intense employer hostility to unions and membership density levels above the national figure, we propose that social capital and right-to-work are crucial analytical elements. West Virginia has a long and contentious labor history shaped largely by the state's geography and natural resources, and this context inhibited both right-to-work legislation (Weiler, 1997) and the formation of social capital. Thus, because of its blend of characteristics as well as its focal role in labor relations development, West Virginia provides a useful case study to understand the econometric results of our study. Most importantly, the absence of a right-to-work law underscores the ways in which unions can fill a critical gap in a state's institutional structure.

Social interactions in West Virginia are limited largely by topography. The state is remarkably rugged, and the natural "hollows" that have been created by millennia of water erosion make for many isolated pockets of rural habitation. The state is in fact one of the most rural states in the union. This isolation has led to a strong sense of family and kinship, but also relatively less social interaction with residents outside the immediate community. This situation has naturally led to networks of trust primarily based on family and local ties rather than broader

involvement in formalized social or civic organizations. While one could say that West Virginians have a tremendous amount of social capital invested in their families and nearby communities, their links to external and more formal groups are necessarily lower. This characteristic is underlined by the low social capital index for the state. The key indicators that give the state this low ranking are those tied to links with broader formal organizations rather than those related to kinship or very local community interactions.

Although often exaggerated, there does tend to be a natural distrust of outsiders given this isolation, reflected by the low “trust” finding of the social capital index. This sensitivity was especially inflamed by the antagonistic history of labor-management relations (Lee, 1969). The development of the steel and textile mills, as well as the notorious events in the coal fields (Sayles, 1987), has been one of external investment and control of geographically concentrated companies and extraction. The sudden arrival and development of such large-scale and highly-capitalized firms was extraordinary by the state’s standards. The influx of migrant labor in reaction to these opportunities further strained the localized ties that had developed historically. The confrontational approach that management developed towards labor continues, as reflected in the unusually high rate of unfair labor practices and in bitter labor disputes such as the recent strike at Ravenswood Aluminum (Juravich and Bronfenbrenner, 1999).

The combination of these features resulted in a natural demand for unions. The social-capital intensive institutions needed to bind workers from a broader set of communities in the face of a better-organized management structure did not exist naturally. That fact is reflected in the low level of social capital found in the state, largely based on indices that measure broader civic engagement necessary to organize beyond highly localized and familial ties. Unions therefore represented an ideal structure for a wider set of workers to organize their interests,

given the fewer inter-community networks and the consistently high levels of labor-management antagonism. Low levels of social capital, in the face of high levels of unfair labor practices, precipitated an institutional structure to bind workers together without the constraint of right-to-work legislation. Unions became the natural solution to the problem of collective action.

CONCLUSIONS

Right-to-work laws are correlated with lower state levels of union density after controlling for employer hostility and the social and ideological contexts. Our findings show that right-to-work laws exert an independent and strongly negative effect on union density, with a magnitude of 6.6 percentage points, *ceteris paribus*. States with a relatively greater number of unfair labor practices — indicating greater employer opposition to worker organization — have systematically lower unionization rates. Further, unions appear to be effective substitutes for low social capital because they give workers an institution to bridge gaps in trust, as in West Virginia. This study's unique cross-sectional combination of right-to-work, unfair labor practices, and social capital explains 78% of the state-to-state variation in union density.

Thus, our results indicate that right-to-work laws reduce the ability of unions to organize workers and to develop workplace institutions conducive to collective bargaining. That finding is supported by comparative studies of Canadian union density (Taras and Ponak, 2001). Historically, federal labor policy in the U.S. has favored workers' rights of organization and collective negotiations toward the objective of macroeconomic stability, and union security is an important means of promoting that objective. When conceived by Senator Wagner in 1935, the design of the National Labor Relations Act was to subordinate individual choice to considerations of class power and economic emancipation (Barenberg, 1993). The Taft-Hartley

amendments identified rights of individuals and state sovereignty as policy concerns, but those concerns are incompatible with federal interests in uniform labor market regulation and union formation (Gross, 1995). States arguably should have no better claim to opt out from collective bargaining law than they should from other employment legislation, such as civil rights laws. As Milton Friedman (1962) pointed out in his classic critique of employment regulation, both right-to-work and anti-discrimination laws interfere with the contractual freedom of an employer's right to offer terms and conditions of employment and a worker's right to accept or reject those terms.

To conclude, this study finds a clear link between right-to-work laws and unionization. The most important result is the confirmation of previous research that membership density is reduced by the existence of such laws. Consistent with our findings, a potential legislative step in facilitating the growth of unions would be to revisit the federal law permitting right-to-work jurisdictions. Put simply, right-to-work laws are inimical to the conception of national labor policy articulated in the National Labor Relations (Wagner) Act. A comprehensive recent treatment of the statute (Gross, 1995: 280) argues: "The recrafting of a national labor policy must begin with a precise and certain statement of its purpose and objectives. Fundamental questions must be confronted and answered." In this study, we demonstrate that right-to-work laws do matter, which further underlines the importance of considering whether such laws in fact mesh with stated national objectives.

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Table 1:

State Ratio of Unfair Labor Practice Charges to Election Petitions, 1980-90

STATE	ULP	ELECTION PETITIONS	RATIO
West Virginia	4,400	575	7.65
Indiana	11,941	1,829	6.51
North Carolina*	3,817	593	6.44
Colorado†	4,587	748	6.13
Texas*	8,944	1,531	5.84
Nevada*	2,951	505	5.84
Tennessee*	6,396	1,148	5.57
Kentucky	5,132	956	5.42
Georgia*	5,784	1,094	5.29
Oklahoma	2,306	442	5.22
South Carolina*	1,421	278	5.11
Mississippi*	1,850	364	5.08
Louisiana*	2,630	519	5.07
Connecticut	5,769	1,044	4.95
Ohio	17,830	3,843	4.64
Virginia*	4,123	893	4.62
Wyoming*	398	91	4.37
Arizona*	3,291	755	4.36
Nebraska*	1,151	268	4.29
Maryland	4,850	1,152	4.21
Massachusetts	8,454	2,013	4.20
Rhode Island	1,105	263	4.20
Missouri	9,461	2,276	4.16
Michigan	15,732	3,852	4.08
California	34,461	8,492	4.06
Florida*	6,970	1,722	4.05
Illinois	16,551	4,097	4.04
Pennsylvania	17,072	4,281	3.99
Wisconsin	6,375	1,599	3.99
Vermont	450	114	3.95
Arkansas*	1,600	409	3.91
New Mexico	1,099	288	3.82
Kansas*	1,809	476	3.80
Washington	6,789	1,801	3.77
Alabama*	3,176	867	3.66
New Hampshire	589	165	3.57
Maine	956	274	3.49
Alaska	1,152	342	3.37

New York	23,446	7,232	3.24
Delaware	603	186	3.24
New Jersey	9,910	3,218	3.08
Oregon	2,899	1,000	2.90
Iowa*	2,097	750	2.80
Hawaii	1,395	531	2.63
Idaho*	767	297	2.58
Montana	1,100	437	2.52
Utah*	766	308	2.49
South Dakota*	228	102	2.24
Minnesota	3,157	1,471	2.15
North Dakota*	271	152	1.78

Table 2:
Descriptive Statistics

	SOCK	RTW	ULP	VOTE	DEMO	MTG	UNION
Mean	0.020208	0.458333	4.216042	0.553677	45.37708	0.191327	11.89375
Median	-0.070000	0.000000	4.070000	0.557500	46.20000	0.187391	11.20000
Maximum	1.710000	1.000000	7.650000	0.685500	61.00000	0.327429	25.50000
Minimum	-1.430000	0.000000	1.780000	0.420000	26.30000	0.102683	3.600000
Std. Dev.	0.781026	0.503534	1.231810	0.065118	8.274756	0.054195	5.320391
Skewness	0.345482	0.167248	0.381648	0.047356	-0.333435	0.243353	0.350311
Kurtosis	2.501713	1.027972	3.138864	2.151390	2.899158	2.377215	2.177428
Jarque-Bera	1.451441	8.001565	1.203807	1.458219	0.909769	1.119332	2.334993
Probability	0.483976	0.018301	0.547768	0.482338	0.634521	0.571400	0.311145
Sum	0.970000	22.00000	202.3700	26.57650	2178.100	8.227082	570.9000
Sum Sq. Dev.	28.67010	11.91667	71.31575	0.199294	3218.165	0.123358	1330.408
Observations	48	48	48	48	48	43	48

Table 3:

Correlation Coefficients

	SOCK	RTW	ULP	DEMO
SOCK	1.000	-0.428	-0.605	0.003
RTW	-0.428	1.000	0.139	-0.521
ULP	-0.605	0.139	1.000	-0.127
DEMO	0.003	-0.521	-0.127	1.000

Table 4:Regression Results
Dependent Variable: UNION

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
C	11.92***	4.21
RTW	-6.60***	1.35
ULP	-0.98*	0.49
SOCK	-0.93	0.98
DEMO	0.16**	0.07

Adjusted R-squared	0.63
Durbin-Watson	2.17
F-statistic	20.61

*** : Significant at the 1% level
 ** : Significant at the 5% level
 * : Significant at the 10% level

Table 5

Regression Results
Dependent Variable: UNION

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error
C	5.79	7.93
RTW	-6.63***	1.12
ULP	-1.02**	0.47
MTG	-36.93***	10.47
VOTE	24.16**	9.90
DEMO	0.16**	0.06

Adjusted R-squared	0.78
Durbin-Watson	2.03
F-statistic	31.16

*** : Significant at the 1% level
** : Significant at the 5% level
* : Significant at the 10% level