

## Rocky Mountain News

For House Bill 1072 on unions  
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This Speakout has not been edited

By Timothy Allport, Littleton

Your recent editorial, "All union bill a blow to liberty", echoes the typical boardroom argument that unions are bad and business is good. I got lost in a song with your seemingly patriotic defense of worker freedom. What your argument really amounts to is business as usual with no progress. The common contention that unions hurt business is the same old fear mongering that subordinates social justice to the ivory towers. Democratic unions are one of the best paths to empowerment for common people. Due process in the American workplace is taking a nose dive as the labor movement loses ground; and that is no accident. Busting unions and targeting activists is the first step to preventing democratic workplaces. This country defines itself on the concept of liberty and a government of checks and balances, but trial by fire labor laws often make it impossible to form unions. This state is good example of such. Democratic elections are normally a one time majority rule vote. The current laws as your editorial described are designed to prevent unions from forming. Most employees readily join unions when they know their jobs are safe.

Those same employees trend very lightly against an employer bucking a union. House bill 1072 is about providing basic fairness for employees and the people who represent them. Unions generally have no problem with "open shop" laws giving employees the option of joining as long those non-members are not covered by our contracts. Think about it. How come people have to pay homeowners association dues when they never use the pool and often disagree with the elected homeowners board? How come we have to pay fees when we go to our local health club? Simply, because if we are choosing to accept the benefits of the organization, then we should have to pay for them. Unions should not have to represent non-members. Labor unions provide employees lawful input into their lives at work. Such democratic principles should be a common goal of a just society. Employees in most European countries have many more rights than American workers. The American workplace, in contrast, more closely resembles a giant Wal-mart where the discretion of the nice manager rules "at will". Passing House Bill 1072 is the right thing to do. It will help bring the principles of democracy we live by to a place where it is needed now more than ever - the workplace.

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