

Editorial

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Right to Work Threatened

AMONG fundamental freedoms of Americans are the right to choose a career, to work where they prefer, and to change jobs when better opportunities become available.

This right to work has been opposed for years by union bosses, who want to control all jobs and all pay scales. They have come close to their goal, and now they are driving to wipe out entirely our traditional right to work.

Congress has enacted laws giving labor the power to require union membership by all employees wherever they can establish a "closed shop". However, Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act reserves for voters in each state the authority to determine whether unions may demand compulsory membership.

Twenty states have taken action to assure workers that they have the right to decide for themselves whether they shall join a union or not join a union. Most of these states are in the "Sun Belt", where industries and jobs are developing fastest. Unfortunately, Oklahoma is not yet among them.

Arkansas is one of the "right to work states", but union bosses have not given up. By spending large sums of money, they have succeeded in bringing the compulsory membership issue to a vote again November 2.

Unions are campaigning vigorously to upset workers' rights, even though the "Land of Opportunity" has gained 77,000 new manufactur-

ing jobs during the past decade.

Oklahoma is not a strong union state, but labor leaders here have repeatedly repulsed efforts to regain this privilege for workers to choose whether to join or not join unions.

The outlook is even more threatening from a national point of view. Unions are backing Candidate Jimmy Carter for president, because he has said he "would be glad to sign" a law for abolition of "Right to Work" laws.

This is a plank in the Democratic platform and Carter is committed to full support. The platform also calls for federal legislation to allow "common situs picketing".

Under common situs picketing, unions would be allowed to picket business firms with which they have no dispute, effectively spreading strikes through a community, state or the nation.

The Republican platform is just the opposite. It holds that the right of determining union membership should be continued as provided under Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.

It also opposes legalization of common situs picketing, unionization of the military, and public employees' strikes.

Unless voters reverse the trends, the day may not be far distant when decisions on where to work, what to do and the rate of pay may be determined by labor politicians in Washington, and not by negotiation between employers and employees.