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Majority Favors Right-to-Work Law

EVIDENCE is strong that labor union membership would be considerably less if laws did not compel people to join and pay dues in order to hold their jobs.

As it is, membership in AFL-CIO has been declining since 1975. Labor leaders have admitted that where workers have freedom of choice, many do not join unions.

Labor wants to abolish that freedom. That is why union bosses are demanding repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley labor law. It allows states to guarantee freedom of choice.

If Congress would do what the majority of Americans prefer, it would make freedom of choice as to whether to join a union nationwide, extending it to every worker, everywhere.

The Oklahoma Legislature has been remiss in its failure to enact a "right to work" law. Instead, a bill to require non-union workers to pay "service fees" to unions in lieu of dues is pending in the Legislature at present.

Oklahoma is surrounded by states offering the "right to work" without being forced to join unions. Industrial development leaders say they are severely handicapped in seeking new factories.

In a highly publicized federal case, two broadcasters, William F. Buckley Jr. and M. Stanton Evans, this year won a long fight for the right to work without belonging to a union.

The American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), the union involved, agreed to notify in writing TV and radio employees that they are not obligated to join AFTRA in order to keep their jobs.

Business executives have been hampered in dealing with union actions because federal laws give special privileges to union organizers. Legislation pending in Congress would give labor unions further advantages over employers in this respect.

However, business is taking steps to present its story to employees. Consulting companies are springing

up to advise business firms on what they can and cannot do in labor relations, and apparently they are being well patronized.

The National Association of Manufacturers has formed a subsidiary, the Council on Union-Free Environment. Its stated purpose is to make unions unnecessary by fostering "strong, progressive and positive employer-employee relations."

Unquestionably, unions have served useful purposes in the past by helping to bring about recognition of the workers' part in the industrial system and to improve working conditions.

Now that unions have become dominated by bosses who use membership primarily as a means of raising funds and gaining political power, the relationship has changed.

Business and the public should be recognized and given equal opportunity to influence working people. And employees should not be compelled to join a union, unless they want to.