

# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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## Statement by AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney on “Right to Work” (for less) Initiative June 29, 2007

Councilman Ryan Frazier’s deceptively named “right to work” initiative is an attack on Colorado’s workers and economy.

Working people in Colorado have higher wages than workers in states that have so-called “right to work” laws. On average, Colorado working families make \$7,500 more per year than their “right to work” (*for less*) counterparts. That’s because so-called “right to work” laws make it difficult for workers to build the bargaining power to negotiate higher living standards.

Overall, workers who belong to unions earn 30 percent more than those who don’t and are much more likely to have employer-provided health coverage and pensions. But beyond being good for workers, unions are good for communities. Better wage and benefits through unions mean that more families can make it on their own - - thus shifting the cost burden off the taxpayers’ backs.

These improvements didn’t just happen over night. Workers and their unions work hard for these vital gains.

Unfortunately, in their attempts to undermine workers’ bargaining efforts, the business community and their allies continue to push for these so-called “right to work” laws, requiring that unions provide the same services and benefits to members and non-members alike, despite the fact that nonmembers do not have to pay anything for what they receive. This is unfair.

Councilman Frazier’s initiative will only weaken workers’ power to bargain for better wages and benefits at the workplace, while dragging down wages and standards for all of Colorado’s working families.