



Right-To-Work Referendum Collection (S0431)

Collection Number: S0431

Collection Title: Right-To-Work Referendum Collection

Dates: 1978-1979

Creator: Lumpe, Gus

Abstract: The Right-to-Work Referendum was initiated in Spring, 1978, as an effort to limit Missouri labor unions by constitutional amendment, making membership optional rather than mandatory. Organized labor worked diligently against the proposed amendment and successfully defeated the referendum on November 7, 1978. The materials in this collection consist of reports, brochures, press releases, and correspondence.

Collection Size: 0.25 cubic foot
(9 folders)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Right-To-Work Referendum Collection* (S0431); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by Gus Lumpe on July 29, 1980 (Accession No. SA2310).

Processed by: Processed by Western Historical Manuscripts Collection staff July 1980. Revised by Zack Palitzsch July 2020.

Historical Note:

The Right-To-Work Referendum was legislation enacted by those that opposed Amendment 23, or the Right to Work Amendment of the Missouri Constitution. Amendment 23 was placed on the November 7, 1978 ballot in Missouri. It stated:

“Constitutional Amendment No. 23 provides that no person be deprived of the right to work for any employer because of membership or nonmembership in any labor organization or because of payment or nonpayment of charges to any labor organization. It is estimated that there would be no additional cost or savings to the state if this amendment is adopted.”

This measure would have allowed individuals to have the right to work regardless of membership status in a labor organization. The Right-To-Work Referendum was birthed by the amendment’s opposition. The opposition commissioned anti-Right-To-Work materials including flyers, brochures, and bumper stickers. They also held press releases, debates, and rallies to fight against Amendment 23. Their work paid off as 60% of people voted no to Amendment 23, thus defeating the motion to add the Right-To-Work to the Missouri Constitution.

The right-to-work measure in Missouri showed up again in 2017 as the Senate passed Senate Bill 19 (SB 19) that would enact the state’s right-to-work law, which was slated to go into effect in August 2017. Much like its earlier rendition, SB 19 would allow individuals the right to work regardless of their membership status in a labor organization. Proposition A was created as a veto referendum. Opposers of the right-to-work law gathered signatures to get Proposition A onto the 2017 ballot. A vote for “yes” would uphold SB 19, while a “no” would repeal SB 19. The right-to-work law was defeated with over 67% of people voting “no” to repeal SB 19.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into nine folders according to original order.

Scope and Content Note:

This collection contains reports, brochures, correspondence, flyers, press releases, and campaign information regarding the opposition of the right-to-work amendment to the Missouri Constitution. The materials in this collection date from 1978 to 1979 and are arranged according to original order.

Container List:

- f. 1 Anti-Right-To-Work material, 1979
- f. 2 Brochures, flyers, and bumper stickers, 1978-1979
- f. 3 Press releases, 1978
- f. 4 Newspaper clippings, 1978
- f. 5 Correspondence and circulars, 1978
- f. 6 Organizations supporting anti-right-to-work movement, 1978
- f. 7 Debates and rallies, 1978
- f. 8 Campaign workers information, 1978
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