Protect our democratic right to be UNION!

Anti-worker forces have many tricks up their sleeves, two of the most insidious being “paycheck protection” and “right to work” proposals. Both sound great: We would all like to have our paychecks guaranteed and protected. And, wouldn’t it be nice if everyone who wants to work was guaranteed a job? Of course, these proposals have nothing to do with protecting the rights of workers.

Paycheck protection deception
In general, paycheck deception (or “paycheck protection” as its proponents misleadingly call it), would silence working families’ voices in politics by placing massive reporting and administrative burdens on unions before they could use dues money for any type of political expenditure—including educating members about issues.

“Paycheck protection” schemes arose as organized labor began to show its effectiveness in recent elections. Many Unions, the CTU included, have begun working to energize union households to vote for pro-worker candidates and issues. And, in many cases, our voices have been heard.

President George W. Bush has said that he plans to pursue paycheck deception legislation even though corporations outspent unions 15 to 1 in the last election.

Paycheck deception legislation has been introduced in several states, including Michigan (H.B. 4252 and H.B. 4305). The Michigan bills have been referred to the House Employment Relations Traning and Safety Committee.

If this legislation ever passes, the CTU will be forced to waste resources soliciting individual permission to do what the membership has already decided should be done.

Both sides of this issue understand that the outcome of the debate will determine whether or not everyday workers have a collective political voice. We need to elect political leaders who recognize and support our right to democratically determine our interests as workers and make our voices heard.

Right to work—for less
So-called “right to work” laws don't guarantee any new rights or create any new jobs or economic benefits. In fact, by denying workers and employers the right to negotiate union security clauses, these laws take away rights. In the 21 states with such laws, wages are lower, poverty levels higher, more people have no health insurance and education spending per pupil is lower.

Right to work for less laws forbid workers and their unions from negotiating union security clauses into their collective bargaining agreements. A union security clause requires all workers who receive the economic benefits of union representation to share in the costs of maintaining their union.

In right to work for less states, workers may choose not to pay fees to the union but the union still is required to represent them. Right to work for less laws, long-promoted by anti-worker, anti-union organizations, threaten to drain unions’ financial resources and prevent unions from representing and protecting members.

The CTU follows Michigan law in allowing CTs to opt out of membership and become agency fee payers instead. These individuals share in our negotiated wages and benefits, they are protected by our contract and we defend them over.

It pays to vote union!

Position paper #7 in the 2002 Elections Series
The Issues and Education Committee of the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU
as vigorously as any member when they have problems in their jobs. By opting out of membership, however, they give up a voice in the decisions of the Union. Every year, the CTU refunds the portion of their dues not spent on furthering collective bargaining. In 2001, that figure averaged $7.28 to 41 agency fee payers.

This is a reasonable solution. Employees don’t have to participate in the Union, but they should pay their fair share for the work the Union does for them.

We have to make sure that our elected leaders—at both the state and federal levels—never entertain the idea that Michigan workers will accept unfair right to work for less legislation.