

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Hart Research Associates

DATE: December 6, 2011

RE: Survey Of Indiana Voters On Right To Work

From December 2 to 5, 2011, Hart Research Associates conducted a telephone survey among 503 registered voters in Indiana on the issue of Right to Work. The survey, conducted on behalf of the AFL-CIO, has a margin of error of ± 4.4 percentage points. This memo reviews the survey's main findings.

1. Support for Right to Work legislation is weak, with just 38% in favor and a 47% plurality opposed. Even among Republican voters, the level of support is unimpressive.

- Just 38% of Indiana voters say they favor passing a Right to Work law that would result in fewer Indiana workers having union representation, while 47% oppose it. Strong opposition (31%) is much more common than strong support (21%).
- Democrats oppose the bill by an overwhelming 52-point margin, and independents also reject it by 13 points (31% favor, 45% opposed). Republicans favor the bill by 59% to 26%, but not with the level of support you would expect for their party's top legislative priority (and the 59% support is considerably weaker than Democrats' 72% opposition).
- Opposition is widespread, with plurality opposition emerging among men and women, all age groups, and all education levels. Union households oppose the bill overwhelmingly, with 70% opposed and 17% in favor, including 58% who are strongly opposed.
- Just 39% of voters know a great deal or a fair amount about Right to Work, while most are unfamiliar with the proposal. However, those already familiar with Right to Work also oppose it by a nine-point margin, suggesting that the question wording did not significantly impact these results.

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2. Indiana voters overwhelmingly disagree with the decision by Republicans in the legislature to make Right to Work their number-one legislative priority. And if this risks another shutdown of the legislature, the public says Republicans should move on to other issues.

- Only one in five (21%) voter agrees that Right to Work should be the legislature's top priority in January, while two-thirds (67%) say that other issues are more important. A 54% majority feel *strongly* that other issues matter more. A major focus on Right to Work by legislators appears to be far out of step with the current priorities of the state's electorate.

As you may know Republican leaders in the legislature have said that their single-highest priority next year will be passing so-called "Right to Work" legislation. Experts say that a Right to Work law would result in many fewer Indiana workers having union representation, as is the case in other states with these laws such as Tennessee, Alabama, and Arkansas. Do you agree that passing a Right to Work law should be the legislature's top priority, or do you feel other issues are more important?

- When voters are reminded that consideration of Right to Work earlier in the year led to Democrats leaving the state, and that this could happen again in January, the public displays no appetite at all for another showdown. Fully 68% say this means Republicans should "move on to other issues" like jobs and the economy, with only 26% feeling that Republicans should "stick to their principles" and keep trying to pass the bill.

3. Many Republican supporters in the state believe that GOP leaders have made a mistake in making Right to Work their top priority.

Overall, 47% of voters currently approve of the job being done by the Republican majority in the legislature. The survey findings reveal that large proportions of these GOP supporters believe party leaders are on the wrong track with their focus on Right to Work.

- Only one-third (34%) of Republican supporters agree that Right to Work should top the legislative priority list, while a 52% majority disagrees and says other issues are more important. Opposition among GOP supporters under age 40 is especially high, with 56% saying other issues are more important.
- When voters are reminded that consideration of Right to Work could lead to Democrats leaving the state, a 47% plurality of Republican supporters say Republican leaders should "move on to other issues," rather than "sticking to their principles" and trying to pass the bill. Women (51%), those under age 40 (54%), and those with liberal-to-moderate views (60%) are especially likely to prefer that their party "move on."

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4. Pushing forward with Right to Work likely will reduce support for Republicans and damage the party's brand in Indiana.

- Indiana voters do not accept Republican claims that they have prioritized Right to Work in order to create jobs. The public feels the party is motivated more by politics, hoping that Right to Work will weaken unions and hurt Democrats (50%), than a belief that the bill will help create jobs (32%). Similarly, 49% think that the GOP is pushing Right to Work because it favors big corporations over working people, more than to create jobs (37%).
- Half of the survey respondents were asked how well different qualities describe Republicans in the legislature at the beginning of the survey, while half were asked the same question after learning that Right to Work was the party's top legislative priority. Any differences in the responses must reflect the impact of learning this one fact about the party. Significantly, we find declines in perceptions of several positive qualities and sharp increases in negative qualities when voters become aware of the Republican focus on Right to Work. The survey findings reveal a five-point decline in the perception that Republicans "have the right priorities," and a 10-point increase in voter belief that the GOP is "pursuing a partisan political agenda instead of working to improve the economy."

Impact Of Right To Work On Republican Party Image

	Describes Very/ Fairly Well BEFORE %	Describes Very/ Fairly Well AFTER %
Are anti-union and are trying to weaken unions in Indiana	45	55
Put the interests of big corporations ahead of average working people	44	49
Are pursuing a partisan political agenda instead of working to improve the economy	37	47
Are strengthening the economy and creating jobs	35	34
Have the right priorities	38	33
Willing to compromise	25	20