

Testimony submitted by

Mary S. Burkholder, Retired Registered Nurse

**Before the House Labor Relations Committee
on Tuesday, August 16, 2011**

**In Support of Pennsylvania Open Workforce Initiative
H.B. 50, 51, 52, and 53**

Legislators, Panelists, Guests and Friends,

My name is Mary Burkholder and I am a retired Registered Nurse. I am also a former union member of the former 1199P/SEIU, currently SEIU, of the Chambersburg Hospital, where membership began with my employment.

I'm here to voice my strong support for the passage of these bills- H.B. 50, 51,52, and 53. We are on the road to establishing a Right To Work Law for Pennsylvania because in the words of our Governor Tom Corbett, "If a Right To Work Bill comes to my desk, I will sign it."

In my introduction, I indicated that I was a former union member. I must tell you that I didn't relinquish my membership until much later. Call it what you will-uneducated, uninformed, I really didn't know anything about the union "way of life" and really was unconcerned about it. That is, until I became active in researching political campaigns.

With my research, I read that increases of dues were coming to our union and how this might just fill the coffers of political campaigns of Democrats, particularly in the Presidential campaign. I was outraged!! I continued my research on this and other issues that involved union members and particularly just for what union dues was used and how it was spent.

I had known from past experience that during contract ratifications, votes were taken to increase the union dues. We were frequently told that all of our counterparts in other districts of the state welcomed the dues increases. It would be for the betterment of the union, as a whole, as it was explained to us.

Then one day we had a visit from the Vice President of our union who told us that those of us who weren't able to vote because of work or other obligations, the absentee vote was considered a "Yes" vote. Soon after this, the Vice President got her walking papers!!!

After this fiasco, I decided to get a petition started and put my complaints in writing. I got signatures of about 25% of the workforce. I knew that I couldn't trust any union official with this information. I was then directed

to Pennsylvanians for Right to Work whose purposes included education on forced unionism and promotion of freedom of choice for workers to join or not join a union. I met with the President, Susan Staub, who informed me more about unions. I was then able to contact the National Right To Work Organization to pursue possible legal action.

From there, I went to Congress with my petition to testify how unfair and unlawful I felt it was for union members to have dues forcibly taken and then not told how that money was being spent.

All of that time and effort got some pretty bad publicity for the union; but to this day, I think whether you're a union member or a fee payer, which is what I became after resigning from the union, you are still obligated to pay money to an organization with whom you disagree on philosophies, whether it be social, political or economic.

I have some advice to those in the nursing profession who are frustrated with work schedules, problems with working relationships and when their voices are not being heard by management, to really investigate before you invest in the promises a union makes. Emotions can really get in the way when trying to make a clear choice for you and your fellow employees, because once you get involved with one of these organizations, it's very difficult to turn back.

There is ,also, another avenue of choice of where to express your concerns in bringing a union into your workplace. Get this information from your Pennsylvanians for RTW Organization. Find this website on the internet @ Pennsylvanians for RTW.org. or call (717) 422-5079.

In closing, Right To Work is the only road to choose for success in getting businesses to come to Pennsylvania and giving workers a choice to join or not join a union. As one well known leader and a good friend of mine, Susan Staub, puts it "It's about importing Liberty and exporting Coercion."

Thank you,

Mary Burkholder