



MEDIA RELEASE

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Billboard Alerts Teachers to Union Deadline National Employee Freedom Week Poll: 82% of Coloradans Support Right to Work

DENVER—A new Independence Institute billboard in Pueblo tells teachers about their limited opportunity to stop paying money to the union.

A copy of the billboard image can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/1sQceZR>. The billboard directs viewers to all the relevant information at <http://IndependentTeachers.org>.

Colorado law says teachers cannot be forced to join or pay fees to a union. Yet unions in 30 different school districts give teachers and other K-12 employees only brief windows of time, and sometimes onerous procedures, to opt out of union membership.

Additionally, Pueblo City Schools and Pueblo County 70 are among seven districts that require **non-member** teachers and/or other employees to file a formal request each year with the union to avoid paying a full year's equivalent of union dues. In both Pueblo districts, the request deadline is **September 15**.

“I was raised to believe you need to ask first before taking something,” said Independence Institute president Jon Caldara. “Until union leaders learn that lesson, we’re happy to help remind teachers about the few options they have to exercise their rights.”

Residents of the state overwhelmingly have expressed their support for employee freedom. A new poll released today by the Independence Institute shows more than

82 percent of Coloradans support allowing union employees to leave their union without force or penalty, a concept generally referred to as right to work.

The poll, with a sample size of 500 Colorado residents, asked the following question: “Should employees have the right to decide, without force or penalty, whether to join or leave a labor union?”

National Employee Freedom Week

Both the poll and the billboard were launched as part of National Employee Freedom Week (NEFW), which runs from August 10-16. NEFW is a grassroots campaign of 68 organizations in 40 states dedicated to helping union employees learn about their right to leave their unions.

The NEFW coalition released a poll showing 82.9 percent of Americans nationwide support the right-to-work principle. Currently, 24 states have passed comprehensive right-to-work laws which allow workers to leave their union without penalty or having to pay dues to an organization to which they choose not to belong.

The Independence Institute also is playing an integral role in NEFW by directly notifying educators in many districts of their limited right to exercise membership options, typically being able to drop membership only at the busy start of the school year.

Unions often do as little as is required by law to inform their employees that they have the right to opt out. But as previous NEFW polling illustrates, over 33 percent of those in union households want to leave. Therefore educational efforts like NEFW are necessary to inform and educate union members about their workplace rights and empower them to make the decision about union membership that's best for them. More information is available at www.EmployeeFreedomWeek.com.

The Independence Institute is a non-partisan, non-profit public policy research organization based in Denver.

The poll was conducted by [Google Consumer Surveys](#), between July 11 and July 31, 2014. It surveyed roughly 500 people and has a margin of error of approximately 3.76 percent.

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