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Iowa has a proud history of being a “Right to Work” state since 1947 when it became law. This means an employee does not have to pay union dues if he or she so chooses. It is that simple: Iowans do not have to pay union dues if they are not a member of that union. I believe very strongly in this law and the economic freedoms it protects.

Being a ‘Right to Work’ state is a selling point that economic development groups use in attracting more businesses and jobs to Iowa. In the current economic climate, there is nothing more important than attracting new business and jobs to Iowa. Furthermore, the Legislature should always keep in mind how to ensure that the businesses and jobs we already have in Iowa remain in Iowa. Forced unionization is not the way to do either.

According to the Association of Business and Industry, a group that represents hundreds of businesses and 300,000 people in Iowa, “being a Right to Work state is a powerful tool that businesses look at when locating to Iowa. Any erosion of this would be a detriment to Iowa’s business climate and that is exactly what we don’t need today.”

So, that brings us to a bill that is being floated around the Capitol today. “Fair Share” is what it is commonly known as in the news and among advocates. The current bill is narrowly written to apply only to Executive Branch public employees of the State of Iowa. This means that Executive Branch employees would be forced to pay dues to a union to which they have chosen not to join. The non-partisan Legislative Services Agency estimates this will generate an additional \$5.3 million in revenue annually for the state employees unions. Eighteen thousand Iowans who currently choose not to join the union will be paying that \$5.3 million.

I do not believe now is the time to force a \$5.3 million burden on 18,000 Iowans. I will not be supporting this bill.