

H. B. 2596

(By Delegates Overington, Cowles, Andes, Householder,
Ellington, McCuskey, Walters, Faircloth and Gearheart)

[Introduced February 21, 2013; referred to the
Committee on Energy, Industry and Labor, Economic
Development and Small Business then the Judiciary.]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by
adding thereto a new article, designated §21-5G-1, §21-5G-2,
§21-5G-3, §21-5G-4, §21-5G-5, §21-5G-6, §21-5G-7 and §21-5G-8,
all relating to establishing the West Virginia Right to Work
Law; prohibiting any requirement that a person become or
remain a member of a labor organization as a condition of
employment; prohibiting any requirement that a person must pay
dues or other fees to a labor organization; prohibiting any
requirement that a person contribute to a charity in lieu of
paying dues or other fees to a labor organization; providing
that certain agreements or practices between labor
organizations and employers are null and void; providing for
monetary penalties; providing for injunctive relief; providing
for a private cause of action for damages and attorney's fees;
providing exceptions; requiring prosecuting attorneys and the
Attorney General to investigate complaints; and defining a

1 term.

2 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:*

3 That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended
4 by adding thereto a new article, designated §21-5G-1, §21-5G-2,
5 §21-5G-3, §21-5G-4, §21-5G-5, §21-5G-6, §21-5G-7 and §21-5G-8, all
6 to read as follows:

7 **ARTICLE 5G. WEST VIRGINIA RIGHT TO WORK LAW.**

8 **§21-5G-1. Definition.**

9 The term "labor organization" means any organization of any
10 kind, or agency or employee representation committee or union,
11 which exists for the purpose, in whole or in part, of collective
12 bargaining or of dealing with any employer, or with any public
13 body, concerning wages, rates of pay, salaries, hours of work,
14 other forms of compensation, or other terms or conditions of
15 employment or grievances, or for any other mutual aid or protection
16 in relation to employment.

17 **§21-5G-2. Right to refrain.**

18 A person may not be required, as a condition or continuation
19 of employment, to:

20 (1) Become or remain a member of a labor organization;

21 (2) Pay any dues, fees, assessments or other similar charges
22 however denominated, of any kind or amount to a labor organization;

23 or

1 (3) Pay any charity or third party in lieu of those payments,
2 any amount or pro rata portion of dues, fees, assessments or other
3 charges required of members of a labor organization.

4 **§21-5G-3. Agreements in violation.**

5 Any agreement, understanding or practice, written or oral,
6 implied or expressed, between any labor organization and employer
7 or public body which violates the rights of employees as set out in
8 this article is hereby declared to be unlawful, null and void, and
9 of no legal effect.

10 **§21-5G-4. Penalty.**

11 A labor organization, employer, public body or other person
12 directly or indirectly violating this article is guilty of a
13 misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less
14 than \$500 nor more than \$5,000.

15 **§21-5G-5. Injunctive relief.**

16 Any person injured as a result of any violation or threatened
17 violation of this article is entitled to injunctive relief against
18 any and all violators or persons threatening violations.

19 **§21-5G-6. Damages.**

20 Any person injured as a result of any violation or threatened
21 violation of this article may recover damages, including costs and
22 reasonable attorney fees, resulting from the violation or
23 threatened violation. These remedies are independent of and in

1 addition to the penalties and remedies set out in other provisions
2 of this article.

3 **§21-5G-7. Duty to investigate.**

4 It is the duty of the prosecuting attorney of each county, and
5 of the Attorney General of this state, to investigate complaints of
6 violations or threatened violations of this article, to prosecute
7 all persons violating any of its provisions, and to take all means
8 necessary to ensure its enforcement.

9 **§21-5G-8. Exceptions.**

10 This article does not apply:

11 (1) To employers and employees covered by the federal Railway
12 Labor Act;

13 (2) To federal employers and employees;

14 (3) To employers and employees on exclusive federal enclaves;

15 or

16 (4) Where they would otherwise conflict with, or be preempted
17 by, federal law.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to prohibit employers and labor unions from requiring employees to become or remain members of labor unions as a condition of employment. The bill prohibits any requirement that a person must pay dues or other fees to a labor organization. The bill prohibits any requirement that a person contribute to a charity in lieu of paying dues or other fees to a labor organization. The bill provides that certain agreements or practices between labor organizations and employers are null and void. The bill provides for monetary penalties. The bill provides for injunctive relief. The bill provides for a private cause of action for damages and attorney's fees. The bill

provides exceptions. The bill requires prosecuting attorneys and the Attorney General to investigate complaints. The bill defines the term "labor organization."

This article is new; therefore, it has been completely underscored.