



# County of Jefferson

State of Missouri  
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**Ken Waller**  
County Executive

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March 11, 2014

To: The Honorable Gary Romine, The Honorable John McCaherty, The Honorable Michael Frame, The Honorable Paul Wieland, The Honorable Jeff Roorda, The Honorable TJ McKenna, The Honorable Elaine Gannon, The Honorable Ben Harris

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From: The Honorable Kenneth Waller, Jefferson County Executive

RE: Right to Work in Missouri

Members of the Jefferson County Delegation-

First of all, let me personally express a big thank you to all of you for everything that you have and continue to do on behalf of the hard-working taxpayers of Jefferson County, your service on their behalf is greatly needed and truly appreciated. I am writing you this morning regarding an issue that has repeatedly come up for your consideration over the last couple of years, that being the issue of Right to Work (currently in the form of House Bills 1094, 1095, 1099 and 1143, as well as House Joint Resolutions 44 and 78). Having the privilege and honor to serve the more than 200,000 residents of Jefferson County as their County Executive and, as stated in our Charter, the County's Chief Economic Officer, I feel it is my duty and responsibility to express my own deep and troubling reservations surrounding this issue.

My concerns regarding this issue are directly related to the ability of the citizens of Jefferson County to find those family-supporting jobs that allow them to build a satisfying life here and maintaining the exceptional quality of living that we are privileged to have in our county, as well as protecting our Jefferson County- and Missouri-based businesses from being undermined by out-of-state competitors that may or may not employ illegal aliens and who may or may not maintain the rigorous safety standards that union contractors and their partners in the Skilled and Construction Trades particularly do. Some of the statistics around this issues are truly alarming and would be extremely harmful to the people and businesses of Jefferson County, such as-

**Lower Wages & Incomes:**

- According to the United States Census Bureau, workers in states that adopt a Right to Work standard earn, on average, about \$5,000 less than workers in non-Right to Work states. In addition, the median household income is lower by about \$6,437 per worker than in non-Right to Work states. Finally, they also found that 12 of the 14 states that have the worst 'pay gap' between the wages of male and female workers are Right to Work states.

Less Investment in Education & Public Services:

- According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation, out of the 10 states that spend the least amount on elementary and secondary education, in some cases as much as \$3,392 less per pupil, 9 of them are Right to Work states. In addition, 8 out of the 10 states that spend the least amounts on public services are also Right to Work states.

Higher Rates of Poverty & Workplace Deaths:

- According to the United States Census Bureau, poverty rates for individuals and children are several percentage points higher in states with Right to Work laws when compared to rates of poverty in states without these laws. In addition, in Right to Work states, almost 26.7 percent of the available jobs are in low-wage occupations, compared with 19.5 percent of jobs in other states and the rate of workplace deaths is over 50% higher than in non-Right to Work states.

Each of these statistics on their own should give an individual pause when considering supporting legislation such as Right to Work, but taken together in their entirety, lead me to one inescapable conclusion: **Right to Work is wrong for the people of Jefferson County and would lead to a decrease in our citizens' ability to adequately support their families and would lead to a lower standard of living than they might currently enjoy.** I strongly encourage all of you, as elected representatives of the people of Jefferson County, to keep all of these facts in mind when being asked to support these pieces of legislation and strongly oppose the efforts of those who would like to see this destructive policy change from taking place.

Thank you again for your continued service to our county and please let me know if I can be of any service in this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Waller". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ken Waller