



Ron Tilton

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Metro Chamber of Commerce

Testimony: SB17 – 055 Prohibit Discrimination Labor Union Participation
Senate Business, Labor & Technology

February 6, 2017

- Thank you so much for having us today.
- My name is Ron Tilton. I am the incoming CEO of FirstBank and a board member at the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.
- I am here with Patty Silverstein to express the opposition of both the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation to Senate Bill 55.
- Colorado is home to a unique, very intentional and highly effective labor status thanks to the Labor Peace Act.
- Our unique model, which is neither Labor Union nor Right to Work, has created a labor climate in Colorado that has produced one of the nation's most robust economies.
- Our state is consistently ranked in the Top 10 of job creation, business climate, entrepreneurship and innovation. And in recent years has twice been named the place to do business by Forbes Magazine.
- I'd like to give you a little history of labor status in the past decade.
- In the first week of the 2007 Legislative Session, the General Assembly delivered a bill to the desk of Governor Bill Ritter. The legislation would have created a "union shop" labor law for Colorado, permitting easier creation of labor unionization. Governor Ritter vetoed the bill. Within a short span proponents of Right to Work then placed an initiative on the ballot to create Colorado as a Right to Work state. The public voted "No."
- During this confused period, the Metro Denver EDC completed a study that demonstrated that Colorado's unique labor law, called the Labor Peace Act, resulted in the following:
 - Colorado came out of recessions faster than Union Shop states and at about the same rate as Right to Work states. Union Shop states lingered far-longer before exiting a recession.



- Colorado incomes were higher than Right to Work States, less than Union Shop states. Both the quicker exit from a Recession far-out weighed the difference on wages. And...
- Job creation was stronger in Colorado than either of the other two states.
- As far-fetched as it seemed in 2007, we came to the conclusion that Colorado had, and still has, the best labor law in the country. The Chamber and the EDC opposed both the union shop bill and the Right to Work initiative. Not because we were a doctrinaire business group, but because the data proved that a change in statute would hurt us either way.
- Subsequently, Patty Silverstein, the EDC's Chief Economist and President of Research Development Partners, completed additional research that shows even greater evidence to the wisdom of the Labor Peace Act. The shorter economic history of Colorado that we've all witnessed recently shows Colorado leading the nation in job growth and substantial increases of well-paying jobs.
- It is a stark affirmation of the power of the Labor Peace Act and she will tell you more about her research in a moment.
- It is not time to cover ground that has been ploughed by both sides and found to be ground that will not grow more jobs. We urge your opposition to Senate Bill 55.
- (Turn over to Patty.)