

### Trump's Vice-President pick

## Indiana's Pence has long anti-union record

By Steven Wishnia, *New York Labor Press*

Indiana Governor Mike Pence, Donald Trump's choice for his running mate on the Republican ticket, has a long anti-labor record, from denouncing minimum-wage increases to putting his own money into a campaign to cut construction workers' pay.

"He's just an anti-worker candidate," says Indiana AFL-CIO President Brett Voorhies. Union officials in the state cite his defense of its ban on the union shop, the repeal of the "Common Construction Wage" for workers on public projects, and his channeling education funds away from public schools.

Prevailing Wage laws say that government agencies must pay wages on construction projects that reflect area standards, so companies can't underbid by cutting wages. In Indiana, it was known as the "Common Construction Wage." Pence not only signed the repeal, he helped fund ads attacking construction wages.

Pence "championed" repealing the state's prevailing-wage laws, says Ed Maher, Operating Engineers' Local 150's communications director. "He made that personal, putting his own money into ads." His campaign spent \$250,000 on those ads, with Pence saying the law "is outdated and costs Hoosier taxpayers millions in additional building costs."

"Wages on public projects should be set by the marketplace and not by government bureaucracy," he said when he signed the bill in May 2015.

State Port Commissioner David Fagan resigned a month before in protest. "Indiana is ranked 38th in per capita

Pence also wanted to give charter schools \$1,500 more per student in state aid than regular public schools get, but that did not pass.

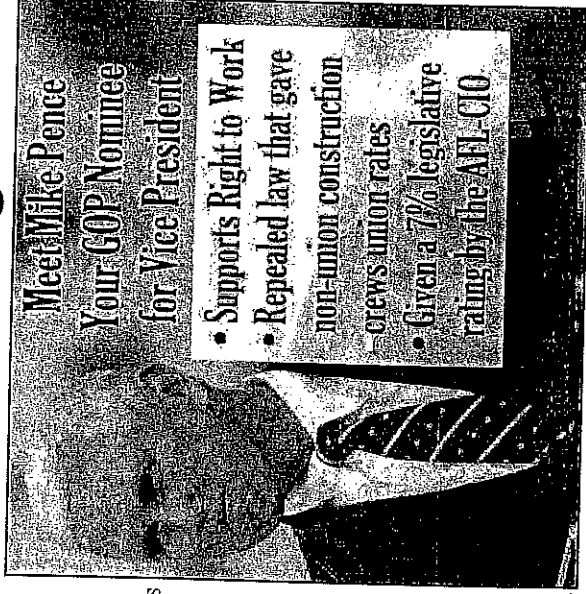
Another unsuccessful bill, says state AFL-CIO spokesperson Haylee Brannon, would have undermined teachers' collective bargaining, by letting schools pay teachers more if they could negotiate higher salaries on their own.

Donald Trump has made much of his opposition to trade agreements that enable jobs to be shipped off

to low-wage nations. But Pence "voted for every free-trade agreement there was" when he was in Congress, says Voorhies.

The internet buzzed when Carrier announced it was closing their Indianapolis plant, says Brannon, Pence met with management, but at first refused to meet with United Steelworkers Local 1999, the union representing the workers.

"The only reason he met with the union was that they were in the hallways of his office," Voorhies



income, and the governor's solution is to cut wages on good middle-class jobs," he wrote in his resignation letter. "What sense does that make?"

Pence also supported Indiana becoming a "right to work" state, where workers don't have to pay union dues, but local unions are still legally required to represent and defend non-dues payers.

Meanwhile, the National Right to Work Committee praised Pence in 2014 as "one of the biggest supporters of Right To Work freedom." Pence calls "right to work for less" laws "a victory for freedom."

Pence, 57, was elected governor in 2012 after serving 12 years in Congress. He's one of the five industrial-Midwest governors who are fiercely anti-labor, along with Scott Walker of Wisconsin, Rick Snyder of Michigan, Bruce Rauner of Illinois, and John Kasich of Ohio.

Pence has also long opposed raising the minimum wage. In Congress in 2007, he voted against increasing it from \$5.15 an hour—where it had been stuck for 10 years—to \$7.25. He blamed the minimum wage for high unemployment among black teenagers and said raising it "violates fundamental free-market economics."

As governor, he expanded a 2011 state law that prohibited local governments from setting higher minimum wages, so that it also banned them from requiring benefits, such as paid sick leave, that are not mandated by state or federal law. The Republican-controlled legislature blocked bills to raise the minimum to \$8.25 in 2013 and to \$10.10 in 2015.

*(continued on page 2)*

says.

Local 1999 offered \$25 million in concessions, Brannon says, but Carrier said it would only keep the plant open if they worked for \$5 an hour with no benefits. They had been making \$14 to \$26. Workers in Carrier's Montenegro, Mexico plant get \$3.

"Mike Pence has been no friend to union members and working- and middle-class Hoosiers," says Ed

Maher. He sees Pence as using the governorship as a stepping stone to higher office, trying to win the support of the Koch brothers and other far-right funders by adopting policies "right out of the national anti-union playbook."

Most of the jobs the state has added during Pence's term, says Voorhies, are low-paying service jobs, such as the two Amazon fulfillment centers outside Indianapolis.