

# Colorado Senate passes bill to become 'right-to-work' state

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## Measure to reform regulations passes quickly through Colorado Senate

Colorado Senate Republicans on Monday pushed through a bill to rewrite state labor law and make this a “right-to-work” state, despite opposition even from some business groups such as the [Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce](#).

Senate Bill 55, sponsored by Sen. [Tim Neville](#), R-Littleton, would prohibit union membership from being a requirement to hold any job in Colorado.



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Sen. Tim Neville, R-Littleton

KATHLEEN LAVINE / DENVER BUSINESS JOURNAL

After Missouri passed a similar law last week, 28 states now have approved similar laws.

Colorado is in a unique position nationally, as its Labor Peace Law is a compromise between right-to-work and union states, requiring two elections and approval from 75 percent of workers before a work force can become a union shop.

Neville argued, however that having any jobs that require a worker to pay into a union, even if that worker doesn't agree with the aims of the union, is a restriction of worker freedom and hurts the economy.

Union leaders, however, said that the bill takes away the truest ability of workers to band together and to negotiate as a team for benefits involving health care, pay or other aspects. [Jason Wardrop](#), [Colorado AFL-CIO](#) president, said he was particularly frustrated because the same bill has

come up [several years in a row](#), passing out of the Republican-controlled Senate only to die in the Democratic-majority House.

“I think it’s just atrocious and a waste of taxpayer money to cram this down our throat when it’s absolutely unnecessary,” Wardrop said.

On Monday, SB 55 passed the Senate with the support of all 18 Republicans over the opposition of 16 of the chamber’s 17 Democrats. Sen. [Irene Aguilar](#), D-Denver, was not present for the vote.

Denver Chamber officials have said they feel that Colorado maintains a delicate labor peace under its current law that aids the business atmosphere.

Senate President [Kevin Grantham](#), R-Cañon City, said that while he respects the opinion of business leaders, he feels looking at Midwestern states that recently enacted right-to-work laws have not hurt their economy.

“I think overall it’s beneficial and the unions have not gone away,” Grantham said. “I just think it gives the workers more right on whether they want to join.”

SB 55 heads next to the House, where it is unlikely to pass.