

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Defends State's Right-to-Work Law Before the Michigan Supreme Court

LANSING, Mich., Jan. 13, 2015 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today appeared before the Michigan Supreme Court in defense of Michigan's Right-to-Work law, which took effect in March 2013. The Michigan Chamber played a leadership role in the fight to pass Right-to-Work legislation in December 2012, shortly after voters soundly rejected Proposal 2, which would have enshrined collective bargaining into Michigan's constitution and prevented any attempt to make Michigan a Right-to-Work state.

The question before the Court, in *International Union v. Natalie Yaw*, is whether the Michigan Constitution empowers the State Legislature to enact a Right-to-Work law that applies to both private and public employees—or whether these matters violate the constitutional autonomy of the state's Civil Service Commission to govern the terms and conditions of employment for state employees.

"The Michigan Constitution resolves this question definitively in the Legislature's favor," stated attorneys John Bursch, of Warner Norcross, and Gary Gordon, of Dykema Gossett, who wrote the Chamber's Amicus Brief and presented oral arguments before the Court on the Chamber's behalf. "The Legislature – through Public Act 349 of 2012 – guarantees that freedom."

"Right-to-Work is good public policy that will protect employees—public and private – from being forced to join a union and pay dues against their will," said Jim Holcomb, Senior Vice President for Business Advocacy & General Counsel for the Michigan Chamber. "Right-to-Work legislation does not prohibit a union's right to exist or prevent collective bargaining – it just gives every employee the ability to decide for themselves if joining or financially supporting a union is the right choice for them."

"The Michigan Chamber will defend Right-to-Work in the courts as vigorously as we fought for passage in the Michigan Legislature," added Holcomb. "Union bosses must not be allowed to overturn this landmark legislation through meritless lawsuits."

"The issue is very clear: Michigan's lawmakers have constitutional authority to enact laws applicable to all employees, public and private," Holcomb concluded.

The Michigan Chamber is a statewide business organization representing approximately 6,700 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber represents businesses of every size and type in all 83 counties of the state. Michigan Chamber member businesses provide jobs to 1.5 million residents. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process. It is one of only six state chambers accredited by the U.S. Chamber and one of only four state chambers accredited with distinction.

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For further information: Jim Holcomb, Senior V.P., Business Advocacy & General Counsel, Michigan Chamber of Commerce, (517) 896-6686

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