

Memphians Say No to Right to Work Amendment

By Kathryn Eftink

While Tennessee passed the Right to Work amendment by 70 percent, many Memphis voters at the Second Baptist Church in East Memphis said no to the amendment this past election day.

“I don’t agree with it,” said Darcy Thomas, a reporter at FOX13. “It shuts out unions, and when it comes to the ability to work, sometimes you need support which is the point of a union.”

Likewise, to Thomas, Mason Chumpia, an Internal Medicine specialist, agrees that the effects of the Right to Work Amendment will not be beneficial for Tennessee, and it undermines the power of labor unions.

“I have concerns,” Chumpia said. “The passage of the amendment might have an adverse effect on unions to participate in collective auditing.”

Diamond Adams, 30, was also among the people voting that said the Right to Work amendment will come with harmful adverse effects. She said that people need to be protected.

The average worker in Right to Work states earns \$5,971 less than states without the amendment, and there are more people under the age of 65 who are likely to not have health insurance according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

“It is already so hard to get a good job that pays you well and gives you good benefits,” Adams said. “These companies are not paying you what you are worth.”

Younger voter 19-year-old Orville Williams said he hoped for the passage of the Right to Work amendment and that it would help people in Memphis.

“If passed, I think it would be beneficial for minority groups who seek work and to help with their families,” Williams said.

However, poverty rates are 15 percent higher in Right to Work states according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and poverty rates are at 23 percent in Memphis according to the 2022 Memphis poverty fact sheet.