Right-To-Work Law Takes Effect In Michigan

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DETROIT (AP) — Republican Gov. Rick Snyder said a right-to-work law that took effect Thursday is a milestone that will bring jobs to Michigan, while protesters promised to exact revenge at the polls for the contentious measure Snyder signed in December.

"The labor movement has done a lot of great things for our country. It's not about being anti-union in my view. It's about being pro-worker," Snyder told business and government leaders.

The law allows Michigan workers to choose not to financially support unions that bargain on their behalf. It applies to labor contracts that are extended or renewed starting Thursday, so many unionized employees will not be affected until their existing collective bargaining agreements end months or years from now.

Union organizers asked people to wear red to protest Michigan becoming the 24th right-to-work state. Dozens did so at a morning rally outside the Detroit Athletic Club, where Snyder spoke at a "Pancakes & Politics" event.

Toting a "Snyder (equals) Snake" sign, 52-year-old Detroit resident Dwight Jarrett called on the governor to repeal the law.

"If he doesn't do the right thing, we'll make sure he's out in 2014," he said.

The law cannot be overturned directly in a referendum, though unions could decide to back a 2014 ballot measure that effectively overturns it.

Multiple lawsuits have been filed to strike down the law. Legal challenges in neighboring Indiana, which passed a right-to-work law in 2012, have been unsuccessful.

Snyder said during the event that right-to-work is "done" and "over with."

"This was a significant milestone. It's going to make Michigan more competitive," he said.

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