

# Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

The facts Big Labor bosses would rather you didn't hear about.

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*Compulsory unionism breeds corruption. In each issue of "Exposed," the National Right to Work Committee will highlight yet another example of union-boss abuse spawned and perpetuated by Big Labor's government-granted privilege to force workers to pay union dues, or be fired.*

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## **Connecticut Politicians May Tell Cancer Patients: 'It's Not That We Love You Less; We Just Love Big Labor More'**

Late last year, the nonprofit Yale-New Haven Hospital in southern Connecticut announced the good news for its community and for the entire state.

The hospital had approved the construction of a new \$430 million, 14-story, comprehensive clinical cancer center that would "consolidate all clinical cancer care services into one building and make vacated space available to meet growing demand for hospital clinical services," a December 13 press release explained.

Hospital President Joseph Zaccagnino spelled out the benefits the privately financed center would bring upon its opening in the fall of 2008: "For the 7000 Connecticut residents stricken with cancer each year it will mean closer access to state-of-the-art care and innovative therapies. For our community it will mean approximately 400 new permanent positions across a wide range of job responsibilities, as well as 350 construction jobs at the peak of the 36-month project. For our physicians and staff . . . it will mean more resources, more opportunities to share discoveries and knowledge and easier access for patients to the latest cancer treatments."

The boss of the biggest local affiliate of the biggest union in the AFL-CIO was also apparently pleased by the news. But Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1199 chief Dennis Rivera and his lieutenants like the proposed cancer center because, they hope, it will give them enough leverage to secure recognition as the "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent over Yale-New Haven Hospital employees.

For years, Mr. Rivera and other bosses of the New York City-based Local 1199 have tried to browbeat the hospital into "voluntarily" granting them monopoly power to bargain over the pay, benefits, and working conditions of roughly 1800 of the hospital's 3000 medical staff employees. Of course, under federal labor law, Local 1199 officers could *force* the hospital to bargain union-only, but first they would have to win a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)-supervised election.

Mr. Rivera and company clearly don't believe they would win a secret-ballot election conducted under the NLRB's rules. NLRB rules permit the hospital to explain to employees why they may not benefit from unionization, but strictly prohibit the hospital from threatening employees or even asking how they personally, or their coworkers, intend to vote.

Until recently, the SEIU Local 1199 hierarchy demanded that there be no election at all, and that the hospital instead agree to a "card check" deal. With "card checks," individual workers under the watchful eyes of union organizers may be intimidated into signing themselves, and ultimately all their nonunion fellow employees, over to union-boss control.

Unfortunately for Big Labor, most workers around America recognize that "card checks" are an attack on their freedom of choice, and Yale-New Haven Hospital employees appear to have overwhelmingly rejected the idea.

Local 1199 kingpins have consequently flip-flopped and now claim to want an election, just not an NLRB-sponsored election. However, they insist that "community leaders," whom the SEIU brass presumably will handpick, get to count the ballots, and also on an as-yet unspecified gag rule to keep hospital managers from "interfering" in the election.

Clearly hopeful that the hospital would not resist the forced unionization of its employees too strenuously now that it needed help from New Haven's Big Labor-"friendly" local politicians to build its cancer center, Local 1199 began spending a reported \$100,000-a-week on a TV attack ad campaign in January.

But hospital officials have so far refused to cave in. Late last month, Big Labor New Haven Mayor John DeStefano (D) turned up the pressure when he publicly predicted, according to *New Haven Register* reporter Mary O'Leary, that the cancer center would be "dead in the water" unless the hospital cut a deal with Local 1199 bosses.

When asked whether they would in fact vote to block construction of the cancer center unless Yale-New Haven Hospital agreed to the Local 1199 hierarchy's forced-unionization scheme, several New Haven aldermen were noncommittal. That means Connecticut cancer patients and cancer specialists have good reason to be nervous.

The fact that a much-needed cancer center may be "dead in the water" because of a Big Labor power grab is just the latest example of why Congress should repeal the misguided 1974 law extending the federal authorization for compulsory unionism, including union monopoly bargaining, to employees of nonprofit hospitals.

The National Right to Work Committee and its 2.2 million members oppose compulsory unionism in every type of enterprise. But the "hate-the-boss" class warfare this system fosters is especially counterproductive in nonprofit hospitals and other health-care facilities. It's time for Congress to put an end to the ongoing madness in New Haven and other communities across America.

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