

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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Has the 'Governator' Been Reprogrammed By Tax-Loving Teacher Union Bosses?

As fans of Arnold Schwarzenegger's Hollywood career may recall, in each of the three *Terminator* movies he plays an emotionless machine sent from the future to destroy his enemy – but the enemy varies. Depending on who has programmed him most recently, Schwarzenegger wages war against humanity on behalf of the evil computer Skynet, or defends humanity from Skynet's warriors.

Since Schwarzenegger, the Bad Terminator, looks just like Schwarzenegger, the Good Terminator, some people get disoriented watching these movies. But that's nothing compared to the disorientation now affecting the hard-working California taxpayers who helped recall Big Labor Democratic Gov. Gray Davis and elect Schwarzenegger, a Republican, as their new governor less than three years ago.

During his successful campaign, Schwarzenegger slammed Davis for allowing public expenditures on programs favored by Big Labor and other special interests to soar out of control, putting the state deep in debt. Schwarzenegger vowed to slash public spending growth so that California could grant some relief to its beleaguered taxpayers, who today still fork over a higher share of their incomes to government coffers than residents of 41 of the 49 other states.

And for a time, the "Governator," as Schwarzenegger the politician is popularly called, seemed to take his 2003 campaign rhetoric seriously.

In his first budget, while facing the huge budget deficit that he had inherited, Schwarzenegger refused to propose any tax increases. Instead, he sought \$6 billion in spending cuts, and, incredibly, the Big Labor-controlled California Legislature approved most of what he asked for.

In 2005, when the Legislature rejected additional spending reforms, the governor proposed and succeeded in getting on a fall statewide ballot his "Live Within Our Means Act," designed to protect Californians from future massive tax increases.

Big Labor, especially infuriated teacher union bosses, went all out to defeat the “Live Within Our Means Act,” otherwise known as Proposition 76. California Teachers Association (CTA/NEA) union bosses imposed a special forced-dues increase of nearly \$200 per teacher over the next three years to bankroll a \$100 million campaign to defeat Prop. 76 and two other initiatives that the union hierarchy believed threatened its institutional interests.

Union propagandists wielded dues money, which teachers and other public employees are forced under state law to fork over as a condition of employment, to finance an outrageously misleading ad campaign that labeled as a “cut” Schwarzenegger’s proposed multi-billion dollar increase in education spending. And they succeeded in killing Prop. 76 and the two other initiatives they were targeting.

This was a blow to taxpayers, but not nearly as severe a blow as what came next.

After having suffered a painful, but far from fatal, setback at the hands of the most formidable pro-spending lobby in America, Schwarzenegger is now showing little if any interest in standing up for taxpaying families and businesses as he campaigns for reelection this year. Indeed, he now seems eager to give the CTA union bosses practically everything they want!

It’s as if Schwarzenegger the actor’s T-800 Terminator had emerged dented, but more or less intact after combat with his Bad Terminator nemesis in the last two *Terminator* movies, the formidable T-1000, and then suddenly teamed up with the latter to quash the human resistance!

According to a May 14 report in the San Francisco *Chronicle*, early this year the Governor called up CTA czarina Barbara Kerr and offered to pour an additional \$2 to \$3 billion in taxpayers’ money into the state’s notoriously ineffective public schools, with barely any strings attached. Of course, that didn’t satisfy Kerr. She demanded that he and state legislators instead fork over an extra \$4.9 billion in tax revenues over the next seven years.

Schwarzenegger, taxpayers’ erstwhile friend, quickly caved in. If history is any indication, the added billions will not lead to any tangible improvement in education outcomes, but will help significantly increase the number of taxpayer-funded “education” employees who pay forced dues to the CTA union.

Schwarzenegger’s turnabout demonstrates not any special weakness on his part, but rather the skewed incentives that pervasive public-sector forced unionism give all California elected officials.

The fact is, Golden State public-sector union bosses, who wield enormous clout in state politics due to their government-granted monopoly power over public employees, are prospering, even as hundreds of thousands of citizens, disproportionately young private-sector employees and entrepreneurs and their family members, flee California every year.

Government union bosses see no need to change a system that isn’t really working for anyone else. And government union bosses are calling the shots.

The only sure way to break the cycle is to roll back the laws and policies that authorize public-sector forced unionism. Unfortunately, the state of California may have to go broke before elected officials finally agree to adopt this fundamental reform.