

# 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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## **'Why Would We Want to Join a Union That Wants to Choke Us Into Submission?'**

On Tuesday, July 25, a group of roughly 30 desperate workers in Hartford, Conn., marched to City Hall to plea for help from Big Labor-backed Democratic Mayor Eddie Perez.

The workers, all employed nearby at the year-old, \$280 million, taxpayer-funded Connecticut Convention Center, had just learned that yet another event at the center would be cancelled as a result of an ongoing boycott sponsored by union bosses. Union officials proudly claim they have pressured a total of 14 groups into canceling events at the center and the adjacent Downtown Marriott Hotel.

The convention center employees wanted to present to the mayor a petition saying they did not wish to join or be represented by the bosses of the two unions that are orchestrating the boycott – Unite Here! and the Service Employees International Union, or SEIU. (Unite Here! and the SEIU are two of the seven breakaway AFL-CIO unions that now constitute the so-called "Change to Win" Federation.)

Perez had previously all but explicitly endorsed the Big Labor boycott against the convention center and the hotel, despite the fact that this boycott stood to cost his strapped city millions of dollars, and he was not available to speak to the workers when they came by.

Convention center employee Maria Byina was dumbfounded by Perez's attitude. "I think he can stop this. I don't know why he's doing this to the city," she told WTNH Television, an ABC affiliate in New Haven, Conn. "We bring a lot of money to the city and we're losing work. All my coworkers. We're losing work."

Fellow convention center employee Marjorie Whitman couldn't understand why union bosses were sponsoring a boycott without even consulting first with the workers they claim they want to "help." "Nobody has asked them to represent us in any way," she told the Hartford *Courant*.

Perez and his union sugardaddies at first tried to dismiss the protesting workers as dupes of the Waterford Group, the contracting firm that manages the convention center for the state and operates the hotel. But this uncorroborated smear didn't fly with the local media or, evidently, the public. So now the mayor and Big Labor have made a tactical retreat.

On Friday, July 28, Unite Here! and SEIU bosses announced a temporary end to the boycott. But they also warned they could soon reinstate it if a state judge rejects their current legal bid to force Waterford to sign so-called "labor peace agreements" as a condition for receiving roughly \$30 million in taxpayer-funded incentives. The city promised Waterford would receive these incentives when it first agreed to build the hotel and refurbish the convention center.

Signing such agreements with Unite Here! and the SEIU brass would effectively mean acquiescing to a form of top-down union organizing known as the "card check."

Under card-check deals, the employer agrees in advance to allow the union to acquire the power to force employees to accept the union as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent solely through the acquisition of union organization cards.

Of course, a card that is signed under union organizers' peering eyes is far from a reliable indicator of an employee's real views regarding unionization. The card-check system thus helps union organizers intimidate individual workers into signing themselves, and ultimately all their nonunion fellow employees, over to union-boss control.

While it's now unclear exactly where union bosses' Hartford intimidation campaign is going, it seems unlikely the immediate future will be good for independent-minded employees. Either a judge will order a coercive card check, or union bosses will reinstate their economically destructive boycott.

Even as Unite Here! and SEIU bosses were wrapping up a self-congratulatory press conference on the city hall steps July 28 regarding their decision to temporarily suspend their boycott, convention center employee Pete Pusztai publicly confronted them:

"You're basically strangling our income," he told the union officials. "Why would we want to join a union that wants to choke us into submission to let you in? You're not the union I want."

Unfortunately, because current law rewards union bosses for using economic intimidation and abusing government power to secure card-check deals, employees at the Connecticut Convention Center and the Marriott Hartford Downtown could soon find to their dismay that the very union officials who have been "strangling their incomes" are their monopoly-bargaining agents.

To deter Big Labor from adopting in the future the ugly tactics now on display in Hartford, the National Right to Work Committee is now supporting enactment of H.R. 874 and S. 1173. These two measures, now respectively before the U.S. House and Senate, would make it harder for union bosses to seize monopoly-bargaining power by banning all card checks.

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