

# 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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## **Union Boss's 'I Didn't Know What 'Perjury' Was' Defense Flops in L.A.**

Janett Humphries, the former president of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 99 in Los Angeles, lacked the intelligence to run a union.

At least, that's what her lawyer and friendly witnesses said at her criminal trial last month. By her own account, Ms. Humphries – who until recently wielded monopoly-bargaining power over 38,000 school employees, including cafeteria workers, janitors, classroom aides, special education instructors, bus drivers, and warehouse operators in and around L.A. – is so dumb that until a little while ago she didn't even understand what "under penalty of perjury" meant!

Ms. Humphries was accused of conspiring in December 2002 with then-L.A. City Council candidate Martin Ludlow to put seven of the latter's campaign workers on Local 99's payroll. Of course, this payroll is bankrolled with union dues and fees that school employees are forced to fork over, or be fired, under California state law. She was also accused of committing perjury for failing to report the illegal, forced dues-funded "in-kind" support for Mr. Ludlow on state-mandated campaign-contribution disclosure forms.

With the Local 99 machine's assistance, Mr. Ludlow captured a seat on the City Council in a runoff election in the spring of 2003. Two years later, after the unexpected and untimely death of L.A. County AFL-CIO chief Miguel Contreras, Mr. Ludlow resigned from public office to succeed him as the Federation's executive secretary-treasurer – a position far plumier than a City Council seat.

But the scheme cooked up by Mr. Ludlow and political operative George Akili three years ago to pay for campaign staff with forced-dues money siphoned off from Local 99 ultimately backfired when Ms. Humphries's numerous enemies in the union decided to use her role in the conspiracy to get rid of her. Internal union politics thus led to federal and local criminal investigations. And suddenly, early this March, Mr. Ludlow reached a plea bargain with prosecutors and agreed to testify against Ms. Humphries.

Nearly eight months later, on October 27, an L.A. jury refused to accept the efforts by Ms. Humphries's attorney to depict her as a slow-witted figurehead who didn't know she was doing something illegal. They convicted her of two counts of conspiracy and two counts of perjury.

And Ms. Humphries, who faces sentencing on these four counts later this month, could be in even bigger trouble soon. Within a few weeks, she is scheduled to be tried in federal court on related conspiracy and embezzlement charges.

Ms. Humphries and her lawyer continue to claim she is being unfairly singled out. The Los Angeles *Times* acknowledged in its report the day after the verdict: "Several witnesses [at the trial], including top union officials, . . . said that unions are so involved in politics that it can be difficult to tell where union work ends and a campaign begins." And the prosecution did not dispute the defense's contention that many L.A. union bosses routinely sign blank campaign-contribution disclosure forms, never bothering to check if the information later filled in is accurate.

The ultimate irony is that, if Ms. Humphries had decided on her own to pour massive sums of workers' forced-dues money into Mr. Ludlow's campaign, without first consulting with him about how to spend it, and then accurately reported the expenditures, then both of them would be totally in the clear today.

"Coordination" between Mr. Ludlow, his operatives, and Ms. Humphries is what made forced-dues politicking, in this case, illegal. But it's not the real scandal. The real scandal is that federal and California labor laws empower union bosses to make, over the years, billions of dollars in forced dues-funded "in-kind" contributions to their favored candidates at the local, state and federal levels.

Law-abiding Americans should be glad that neither the "I'm not a crook, I'm just a ninny" or the "every union boss does it" defense worked for Janett Humphries last month. But bringing her and Martin Ludlow to justice is no solution at all to the problem of union political corruption. The first step toward a solution is elimination of all government-authorized compulsory union dues and fees.

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