

# 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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## **Federal-Election Cops Strain at an SEIU Gnat, But Keep Swallowing Forced Dues-Electioneering Camels**

Although he later publicly posed as a reluctant participant in Big Labor's billion-dollar 2004 campaign to capture the White House and both chambers of Congress, while the campaign was in full swing Service Employees International Union (SEIU) chief Andy Stern wasn't the least bit abashed about what he and his operatives were up to.

The *Chicago Tribune* reported on August 11, 2004 that the previous month the SEIU had begun deploying an army of more than 2000 political organizers to "register and rally voters in [the 2004 presidential campaign's] so-called battleground states."

And Mr. Stern bluntly acknowledged in a midsummer interview with *Business Week* that roughly "\$40 million [would] be spent" on taking these organizers "off the job to go to battleground states, to house them, and pay for salary [sic] and health care." Mr. Stern even made it plain to *Business Week* that 85% of the money paying for this giant electioneering scheme had come from "regular, dues-paying members."

In reality, the vast majority of SEIU "members" lived then, as they live now, in compulsory-unionism states like New York, Michigan, Illinois and California. In such states, "members" is clearly a misnomer, since virtually all SEIU-"represented" workers, union members and nonmembers alike, are forced to pay union dues or "agency" fees, or be fired.

And Mr. Stern vowed that before the campaign was over he would spend another "\$20 million or so" in funds collected overwhelmingly from "regular, [forced] dues-paying members" on political propaganda mailings, partisan phone banks, and face-to-face electioneering in the workplace. Only a tiny share of the SEIU hierarchy's \$65 million campaign war chest would be spent "giving to candidates."

No one ever doubted that the forced dues-funded operation orchestrated by the top brass of the SEIU, its affiliates, and thousands of other international and local unions was designed

specifically to elect 2004 Democratic presidential hopeful John Kerry and likeminded congressional candidates in November.

Right to Work advocates denounced Big Labor's entire 2004 forced-dues electioneering scheme, which consumed a total of roughly a billion dollars, as immoral. But neither the Federal Election Commission (FEC) nor any other regulatory body gave any indication of considering the scheme in general, or Mr. Stern's part of it in particular, to be illegal.

But late last month, the FEC announced it would impose, partly in response to a National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation complaint, a \$775,000 fine against America Coming Together (ACT). The no-longer-active ACT is a so-called "527" group that was bankrolled in 2004 largely with SEIU-"represented" workers' forced dues and fees and fat contributions from billionaire George Soros and other politically hyperactive magnates.

Interestingly, Andy Stern was an ACT board member.

The premise for the FEC fine was that ACT could not use union-treasury and other unregulated contributions for the "partisan" purpose of boosting John Kerry and other Democratic candidates.

But of course, in 2003 and 2004 SEIU and other union officials poured hundreds of millions of dollars in "unregulated," forced dues-fueled union treasury funds into partisan internal union political-mobilization efforts with aims identical to ACT's without raising so much as a peep from the FEC.

Right to Work advocates are disgusted that SEIU officials and their ACT cohorts paid such a small price (well under 1% of what ACT reportedly spent on partisan political mobilization in 2004) for trampling the free-speech rights of forced dues-paying workers.

Not a penny of the \$775,000 in ACT fines will go back to those workers. And there is an even more fundamental problem with the FEC's action: Its premise is that channeling forced-dues treasury money into the kind of electioneering activities ACT specialized in is a problem when it's done by a 527 group – but not when it's done by a union.

Ordinary Americans can see that it's wrong for Big Labor to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in workers' forced-dues money every election year on partisan federal politicking – regardless of whether or not union officials orchestrate the politicking themselves or contract out the job to a 527 group. But the FEC and federal election law generally have no problem with forced-dues politicking per se.

Repeal of the federal authorization for forced union dues and fees, as the National Right to Work Committee has long advocated, would strike a formidable blow against the Big Labor corruption of the political process. But the \$775,000 FEC fine against ACT, as hefty as that sum may seem to most Americans outside the D.C. Beltway, is little more than a slap on Andy Stern's wrist.

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