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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Big Labor Allies Trample Truth to Protect Forced Union Dues in Colorado

Union officials and their coterie of admirers in the Centennial State are apoplectic about the signs of growing support among Coloradans for enactment of a state Right to Work law that would prohibit the firing of employees for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union.

Even before Secretary of State Mike Coffman's office gave the go-ahead on April 28 to a fall ballot initiative that would add a Right to Work Amendment to the Colorado Constitution, forced-unionism apologists were already launching furious attacks on the proposal.

It's no surprise that union boss-friendly academics are up in arms that Coloradans would even consider stripping the state's union officials of their government-granted privilege to force employees, including union members and nonmembers alike, to pay dues to their union monopoly-bargaining agent as a condition of employment.

However, even by the generally low standards of anti-Right to Work propaganda campaigns, the disregard for the facts recently displayed by Big Labor cheerleaders, such as Prof. Ray Hogler of Colorado State University, is jarring.

Giving the strong impression that he had actually looked into the relative economic growth rates of states with disparate shares of their employees forced to accept a union as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent in contract negotiations, a couple of weeks ago, Prof. Hogler confidently, but falsely, told the *Denver Business Journal*'s Bob Mook: "There's absolutely no correlation between lower union density and economic growth."

On April 22, a National Right to Work Committee staffer pointed out in an e-mail to Prof. Hogler that this claim is flat-out wrong:

“According to the U.S. Commerce Department, the real GDP of the U.S., in chained 2000 dollars, grew by 15.3% from 2000 to 2006 (the most recent year for which state-by-state data are available). But the aggregate real GDP of the 12 states with the highest share of private-sector employees under union ‘exclusive’ bargaining (as reported on the http://unionstats.com web site) in 2000 grew by just 11.7%.

“Meanwhile the aggregate real GDP of the 12 states with the lowest share of private-sector employees under union monopoly control grew by 21.2%. . . . [T]hat demonstrates a very strong negative correlation between ‘exclusive’-bargaining density and economic growth.”

Of course, although overall union monopoly-bargaining density in the 22 Right to Work states is much lower than it is in the 28 non-Right to Work states, the two characteristics are separate.

But there is also a strong positive correlation between the presence of a state Right to Work law and economic growth. And this is true in all parts of the country. In the western part of the U.S., for example, the aggregate real GDP of Right to Work states grew by 28.8% from 2000 to 2006, far faster than the western forced-dues state total of 17.8% and nearly double Colorado’s real growth of 15.6%.

In an April 23 e-mail reply to the Right to Work staffer who had contacted him, Prof. Hogler did not even try to rehabilitate his discredited claim that there is “no correlation between lower union density and economic growth.” Nor did he assert that he was incorrectly quoted as saying something false in the first place. Nor did he give any indication that he would try to correct the record.

To paraphrase the late U.S. Sen. Pat Moynihan, proponents of compulsory unionism are entitled to their own opinions, but they are not entitled to their own facts.

It would be fair enough for Prof. Hogler to say: “States in which relatively few employees have a union as their ‘exclusive’ bargaining agent are growing substantially faster than states that are more heavily unionized. In my opinion, however, the two phenomena are not connected.”

But the people of Colorado deserve better than a Right to Work “debate” in which the anti-Right to Work side seeks to prevail by casting aside reality.

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