

# Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

The facts Big Labor bosses would rather you didn't hear about.

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Vol. 7, No. 8 – August 2008

*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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## **'The Poll Is NOT Designed, or Intended, To Sway the IAFF's Endorsement'**

A recent internal union memo signed by International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF/AFL-CIO) union General President Harold Schaitberger, and directed towards the IAFF's second-in-command and its district vice presidents, illustrates well the thinking of Big Labor bosses who believe they have a right to play politics with forced union dues and fees collected from rank-and-file employees of diverse views.

The July 16 Schaitberger memo was evidently leaked to *U.S. News and World Report* a few days after it was issued and, as this is written, may be located on the Internet. Its authenticity has not been called into question.

The memo concerns a presidential poll of IAFF members nationwide commissioned by Mr. Schaitberger and his lieutenants and conducted June 23-29 by the famous firm Zogby International. Since a substantial majority of IAFF union members are forced under various state laws to join or pay dues to the union, or be fired from their jobs, and an even wider majority of members are forced to accept the IAFF as their monopoly-bargaining agent whether they join it or not, the IAFF can certainly not be assumed to represent the views of its members. And Mr. Schaitberger seems to be very comfortable about that fact.

As he unapologetically explained in the memo, the Zogby poll is "NOT [emphasis Mr. Schaitberger's] designed, or intended, to sway the IAFF's endorsement to either candidate."

The poll found that IAFF members, like other registered voters across America, are almost evenly divided about which candidate they plan to support for President this year: Overall, 41% of IAFF members said that they were currently supporting John McCain, 38% said they were currently supporting Barack Obama, and 21% were either uncertain or opposed to both candidates.

Confronted with such a poll result a few months before a public election, virtually any leader of a voluntary membership organization would decide immediately not to make any endorsement at all. But, of course, for the overwhelming majority of its members, the IAFF union is not a voluntary organization.

It's clear from his memo both that Mr. Schaitberger plans to endorse a presidential candidate, despite the utter lack of a consensus among IAFF members about whom to endorse, and that he plans to endorse Mr. Obama.

To justify the IAFF hierarchy's pending endorsement, Mr. Schaitberger focuses largely on Mr. Obama's support for, and Mr. McCain's opposition to, what IAFF officials have called their "top legislative priority": the so-called "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act."

This legislation (S. 2123 in the Senate) would establish a new federal mandate handing public-safety union officials monopoly-bargaining power over union nonmembers as well as union members "nationwide."

While many IAFF members undoubtedly want the union to represent them in contract negotiations, it is very doubtful that most believe union officials should have the legal privilege to foist union monopoly bargaining on workers who don't want anything to do with a union. After all, a December 2006 nationwide survey conducted by veteran pollster Del Ali and his firm Research 2000 found that 81% of Americans who regularly vote in statewide elections believe that employees in unionized businesses should retain the right to bargain for themselves.

Nevertheless, Mr. Schaitberger is poised to spend untold millions of dollars in firefighters' forced dues and fees to help elect Mr. Obama, who is now supported by barely more than a third of the union rank-and-file, largely because the Democratic candidate supports a federal public-safety monopoly-bargaining mandate.

And the sole reason the IAFF union board commissioned the Zogby poll was not to determine whether or not there was sufficient agreement among union members for an IAFF presidential endorsement to be justifiable, but rather to help forced dues-funded union operatives concoct the most effective possible "sales pitches" for the union bosses' handpicked candidate.

The fact is, regardless of whom they support for President, the vast majority of IAFF members would never think of asking Harold Schaitberger and his cohorts to spend millions and millions of forced-dues dollars in union staff time, travel, postage and phone bills, etc., to prevail upon them to support a particular candidate for President.

But the only truly effective way to stop Mr. Schaitberger and other government union bosses from mounting such forced dues-funded campaigns every election year is to push for repeal of all state laws authorizing forced union dues and union monopoly bargaining over government employees.

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