

# 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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## **Hoffa Appointee: 'Organized Crime Again Threatens the Union'**

Less than two years ago, Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa lauded former federal prosecutor Ed Stier and his team of investigators as “experts” on law enforcement and labor racketeering with “record[s] of integrity.”

Mr. Hoffa's words of praise weren't terribly surprising, since he and the Teamster board had hired Mr. Stier and his associate Jim Kossler to head an internal union “clean-up” program that was designed, in part, to bring about the end of federal oversight of the Teamsters. Teamster officials first consented to federal oversight back in 1989 in order to settle a racketeering lawsuit.

But now it turns out that Mr. Stier and his clean-up team may have more integrity than Mr. Hoffa expected or wanted.

Late last month, Mr. Stier, along with 20 other investigators and lawyers involved in the Teamster union hierarchy's so-called “Respect, Integrity, Strength and Ethics” program, AKA Project RISE, resigned in protest. Project RISE's 10-member advisory panel, which includes former top federal officials and organized-crime investigators, also resigned.

According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Mr. Stier charged that Project RISE had become “futile.” He cited top union officials' obstruction of his investigation of “reliable” allegations regarding mob infiltration of Chicago-area Teamster locals as an example.

As investigators “narrowed in on Chicago locals, they felt increasing pressure from [Mr. Hoffa's] office,” reported the *Tribune*. “Rather than have the investigations continue,” explained Mr. Stier, union officials “literally stopped them.”

According to his letter of resignation, in mid-April, right after Mr. Stier's investigators finished their report on ties between organized crime and Chicago Teamster officials, he learned his office was being shut down by Mr. Hoffa. The Teamster president rebuffed Mr. Stier's requests to meet with him and instead “surrounded himself with political consultants and lawyers.”

Some Teamster officials had participated, charged Mr. Stier, in a deal in which a mob-run company was allowed to use nonunion workers to replace union workers in construction and convention jobs.

“These people didn’t want to be investigated, and it eventually got to a point where the situation got to be intolerable,” Mr. Stier told *New York Times* reporter Steven Greenhouse. “Hoffa’s office was responding to these guys in Chicago, and interfering with our ability to investigate.”

In his resignation letter, Mr. Stier also accused Mr. Hoffa of resisting the imposition of a trusteeship over a Houston Teamsters local, despite still-undisclosed corruption allegations “the magnitude of which dwarfs any [others] in recent years.”

The local’s former boss, Chuck Crawley, is already publicly accused of telling a vendor to jack up the price of a phone system for a new union building and then to kick back the excess charge to him. Mr. Crawley claims he is innocent. He has not been formally charged.

In summary, Mr. Stier wrote that Mr. Hoffa “has permitted anti-corruption investigations to be undermined to a degree that honest Teamsters who came forward with information, believing that the union would protect them, now feel abandoned.

“They are convinced that once again those who have influence in the General President’s office have immunity. . . .

“Based upon Jim Hoffa’s reaction to our report, in which we have made it clear that we have substantial reliable information that organized crime again threatens our union, I have become convinced that . . . continued efforts . . . to create an anti-corruption program in the Teamsters Union would be futile.”

Teamster General Counsel Patrick Syzmanski, ignoring the fact that several members of Mr. Stier's team, and not Mr. Stier alone, have publicly accused Jim Hoffa of caving in to Chicago Teamster bosses with alleged mob ties, claims the problem is that “Ed got too close to this and he lost some perspective.”

Mr. Stier didn’t understand that he couldn’t investigate anything without Mr. Syzmanski’s approval, the latter told the *Chicago Tribune*: “There were situations where he knocked on people’s doors and questioned them when he hadn’t been authorized to do so.”

No one should worry that charges are being swept under the table, continued Mr. Syzmanski. After all, the union has hired defense and civil lawyer Edward McDonald, a part-time actor who hasn’t prosecuted criminals since the 1980’s, to look into Mr. Stier’s charges!

But 15 years of federal monitoring and nearly five years of Project RISE have made it clear the Teamster hierarchy can’t be entrusted with weeding out union corruption.

Last month’s implosion of Project RISE illustrates yet again why the National Right to Work Committee’s battle to pass the National Right to Work Act (H.R. 391/S. 1765), is so important. This bill would empower rank-and-file union members to penalize official wrongdoing effectively, as soon as they see it, by resigning and withholding their dues money.

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