

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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Volunteers Honor Schoolboy's Memory, Enrage Union Boss

Margaret Lennard, an elementary school principal in Brooklyn, Ohio, a small community in the Cleveland metropolitan area, certainly didn't intend to get crossways of a union official this spring when she and her staff decided to hold a ceremony and plant a tree at the school in memory of Matthew Barrick.

Matthew, a second-grader at Ms. Lennard's school, had died February 14 from a brain aneurysm. Matthew's family and his classmates agreed the tree-planting would be a good way to honor him.

According to a May 23 article in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, soon the whole community got involved, and "the idea mushroomed." Student volunteers spent two weekends sprucing up the grounds of Rodoan Elementary School, which he had attended, and the district's high school.

Local businesses, franchises of national chains, and residents donated roughly \$3700 worth of materials for the job. At the ceremony, held in mid-May, schoolchildren sang and wrote tributes to Matthew and also raised money to help his mother pay medical bills.

But to Pat Kirlough, president of the Brooklyn Classified Employees (BCE/ AASCE) union, the seemingly generous actions by schoolchildren, business owners and managers, and other citizens were all part of an evil plot.

According to the conspiracy-minded Ms. Kirlough, honoring the memory of Matthew Barrick was "just an excuse" to circumvent a union contract and, ultimately, to keep forced-dues money out of her BCE union's coffers!

Under an Ohio law rubber-stamped by Big Labor legislators and signed by union-label Gov. Dick Celeste in 1983, custodians, bus drivers, food service workers, teachers' aides, and secretaries who work for the Brooklyn School District all must pay union dues or "fees" to Ms. Kirlough.

If they refuse, she can get them fired.

That's why Ms. Kirlough is aggressively backing a grievance filed by two union militants, Mark Hennings and Doug Scott, against the school district. Ms. Kirlough, Mr. Hennings, and Mr. Scott are furious that community volunteers were allowed to do landscaping on school grounds, supposedly in violation of the union contract.

Their grievance claims that Mr. Hennings and Mr. Scott, both school custodians, should be paid time-and-a-half wages - \$37 an hour - for all the work performed over two weekends, despite the fact that they personally didn't lift a finger.

Brooklyn citizens who learned about the Kirlough-Hennings-Scott grievance at a May 21 school board meeting were outraged. When Brooklyn High School principal Gretchen Derethik defended the school board and the volunteers, some audience members stood and applauded, reported the *Plain Dealer*.

This merely convinced Ms. Kirlough that parents and other taxpayers should never have gotten the opportunity to learn how small-minded and petty she and her two militant followers are.

She groused to the *Plain Dealer* that "grievances are not usually discussed in public" and that she was "'very disappointed' no one stopped discussion of the issue at the school board meeting."

In all likelihood, many forced dues-paying bus drivers, food service workers, teachers' aides, and secretaries in Brooklyn, Ohio, agree with their neighbors that the volunteer landscaping was an appropriate way to remember Matthew Barrick, not a "plot" to deny Ms. Kirlough forced dues she thinks she has coming to her.

But Ohio law denies school employees the freedom to protest the actions of union officials who embarrass them by resigning from the union and cutting off their dues. And Ohio is just one of 20 states that authorize the firing of public-school employees for refusal to bankroll a union.

It doesn't appear to bother Pat Kirlough that she has offended nearly the entire Brooklyn community, including the vast majority of taxpayers who underwrite the salaries and benefits of BCE union members.

But she couldn't ignore it if rank-and-file unionists enjoyed and exercised the power of the purse string to demonstrate how they feel about her antics.

That's why the National Right to Work Committee is fighting in Ohio and other forced-dues states across the country to pass Right to Work laws protecting public- and private- employees alike from being compelled to pay union dues as a job condition.

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