

# Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

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

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National Right to Work Committee • 8001 Braddock Road • Springfield, Va. 22160  
www.nrtwc.org • (703) 321-9820 • (703) 321-7143 (fax)

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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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## **Teacher Union Boss-Backed School Board Member: High School Graduates Need Not Be Literate**

According to the latest slogan dreamed up by their PR department, top officials of the mammoth National Education Association (NEA) teacher union are committed to "making public schools great for every child!" But for the growing number of Americans who regularly monitor the antics of NEA-affiliated teacher union bosses around the country, this slogan is no more than black comedy.

One of the latest episodes in the mordant NEA burlesque is the successful drive by the bosses of the union's subsidiary in Des Moines, Iowa (known as DMEA), to get their longtime militant follower Jim Patch elected to the citywide school board.

Sober-minded Des Moines has a long and honorable history of support for high academic standards. So it's not at all surprising that Patch, a retired shop teacher, raised hackles when he responded in August to local publisher and radio talk-show host Jonathan Narcisse's query as to whether he would be a "champion of accountability" on the school board.

According to a September 7 *Des Moines Register* article, Patch answered: "I would like us to be accountable, but, as far as tying graduation to reading, we're going to have a lot of architects and artists and doctors out there who aren't going to graduate from high school if we do that. The fact is, a higher percentage of those three occupations have this word-blindness problem."

An obviously flabbergasted Narcisse immediately gave Patch a chance to back down from his foolish and error-filled remarks: "So you're saying if a kid can't read, we still ought to consider, if he meets other criteria, giving that kid a high school diploma?" Patch simply reiterated his position: "I think we're going to have to."

Narcisse, who in addition to his aforementioned vocations is president of the State of Black Iowa initiative, later blasted Patch's view as "absurd," insisting that we "cannot continue giving kids diplomas who don't have skills to function in the real world," and urged the DMEA hierarchy to call off its union dues-funded efforts to get Patch elected.

But on September 5 DMEA union officers met and decided they had no problem with installing on the school board an ill-informed ideologue who claims that literacy should not be a high school graduation requirement because it is impossible for dyslexics to learn to read fluently, and the nation's architectural firms, art studios, and doctors' offices are teeming with semiliterate, but otherwise competent, professionals!

Patch then easily won a school-board slot September 10 in an election in which just 8% of Des Moines' registered voters participated. The other two board members elected that day are equally friendly to the DMEA union brass, whose key, though unstated, objectives appear to be to increase the number of dues-paying school employees on taxpayer-funded payrolls and block any attempt to provide a public, unbiased assessment of how schools are performing.

Iowa labor law forces the vast majority of the state's roughly 35,000 public school teachers, union members and nonmembers alike, to accept an NEA-affiliated union official as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent in contract negotiations over wages, benefits, promotions, transfers, and other conditions of employment.

On principle alone, this law is unfair. And in practice, it means that countless honest, conscientious teachers are smeared when NEA subsidiaries, purporting to speak for them all, back school board candidates like Jim Patch, an unabashed foe of high academic standards.

Jim Hawkins, the state director for Professional Educators of Iowa, is a former teacher and administrator. He well knows that the NEA and its Iowa subsidiaries don't speak for his 1,750 members, although many if not most of them are forced to accept an emissary of the NEA empire as their monopoly bargaining agent.

"Unlike the DMEA and other NEA union affiliates, we don't tell our members which candidates, whether for the local school board or for U.S. President, they ought to support," noted Hawkins. "But we do favor policies that are in students' best interest. And 'social passing,' which is really what Jim Patch is pushing for, won't help students succeed in the real world."

The National Right to Work Committee is working to repeal teacher union monopoly bargaining in Iowa and 32 other states with similar laws. Repeal of these laws would give hundreds of thousands of school teachers who support high academic standards and accountability a real chance to change schools for the better.