

Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

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

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Vol. 1, No. 8 – December 2002

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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Thirty-Eight-Hundred New Hampshire State Employees Ordered to Pay Union Dues, or Be Fired

More than a half-century ago, British dystopian writer George Orwell coined the term "doublethink" to denote the simultaneous belief in two contradictory points of view.

"Doublethink" is a hallmark of all modern despotisms, large and small. And fervent forced-unionism devotee Thomas Manning, the state director of personnel for New Hampshire, is an expert practitioner, judging by the extraordinary mental gymnastics he is performing for the benefit of officials of the Service Employee International Union's (SEIU) aptly-numbered Local 1984.

In 1999, the committee that represents New Hampshire in contract negotiations with SEIU officials who wield "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining privileges over state government employees caved in to the union officials' demand that the employees be forced to pay union dues, or be fired from their jobs.

But the bargaining committee did set one condition: The forced-dues scheme would only be implemented after Local 1984 had convinced at least 60% of eligible employees to join the union without being forced to. And over the past three years this has, to SEIU bosses' evident surprise, proven to be a real sticking point.

Many union nonmembers were outraged when SEIU organizers showed up at their door in an effort to intimidate them into joining a union that they believed didn't deserve their support. Roughly 3800 continue to refuse to join.

After years of failed SEIU "recruitment" drives, Mr. Manning and the SEIU brass recently cooked up another way to corral resisting employees into the union. Mr. Manning unilaterally determined that 1200 employees, of whom 900 were union

nonmembers, were actually "supervisors" or "confidential employees," and therefore did not belong in Local 1984's "bargaining unit."

By gerrymandering these employees out of the unit, Mr. Manning has put SEIU bosses over their 60% threshold. Within a few weeks, they expect to begin raking in an estimated \$1.5 million annually in forced union dues (mislabeled as "agency fees") from union nonmembers.

At the same time, under Mr. Manning's peculiar scheme, the 300 "supervisors" and "confidential employees" who have already joined SEIU Local 1984 will remain in the unit for which they are supposedly not eligible.

Mr. Manning scoffs at those who would criticize him for arbitrarily defining the same employee as a "supervisor" in one case, and a "non-supervisor" in another, depending upon which definition is more convenient for his union cronies.

"I don't think it's black and white," he explained to the *Concord Monitor*.

On November 21, a group of 75 nonunion employees of the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord met with Mr. Manning to voice their outrage at being forced to bankroll an organization they have chosen not to join. Nonunion employee Linda Schmidt expressed hope that the seizure of forced dues could still be stopped: "Is the state really ready to fire 3800 people?" she asked.

Fortunately for her, the New Hampshire Legislature is in fact expected early next year to consider whether or not state law should sanction the firing of employees for refusal to pay union dues, even as it protects other employees' right to join or financially support a union without being fired.

The state House of Representatives could take up Right to Work legislation, which would bar the firing of both government and private-sector employees for refusal to join or pay dues to a union, as soon as January. If approved by both chambers and signed by incoming GOP Gov. Craig Benson, such legislation would make New Hampshire the nation's 23rd Right to Work state.

New England Citizens for Right to Work, a grass-roots group based in Manchester, N.H., is leading the fight to pass a Granite State Right to Work law in 2003. The National Right to Work Committee is providing advice and support from its Springfield, Va., headquarters.

Polls show that the vast majority of New Hampshire citizens know that the individual worker is the best judge of whether he or she really benefits from having a union monopoly-bargaining agent, and that the individual worker can be trusted to pay for genuine benefits.

Soon it will be clear whether New Hampshire politicians will follow the will of the people on this important issue.

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