

NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK NEWSLETTER

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National Right to Work Bill Picks Up Steam *Virginia Special Election Results Confirm Legislation's Appeal*

This summer, politically savvy elected officials on both sides of Capitol Hill are eagerly signing on as cosponsors of the National Right to Work Act (H.R.1109/S.873).

From the beginning of June until this month's Newsletter went to press in late July, the Right to Work Bill acquired a total of 25 new cosponsors in the U.S. Congress. It now has a total of 75 House and Senate sponsors.

Measure Would Repeal Federally-Imposed Forced Union Dues

Under current federal labor law, employees who aren't protected by a state Right to Work law, including railroad and airline employees in every state, are forced to pay union dues as a job condition to union bosses whom federal bureaucrats have certified as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agents.

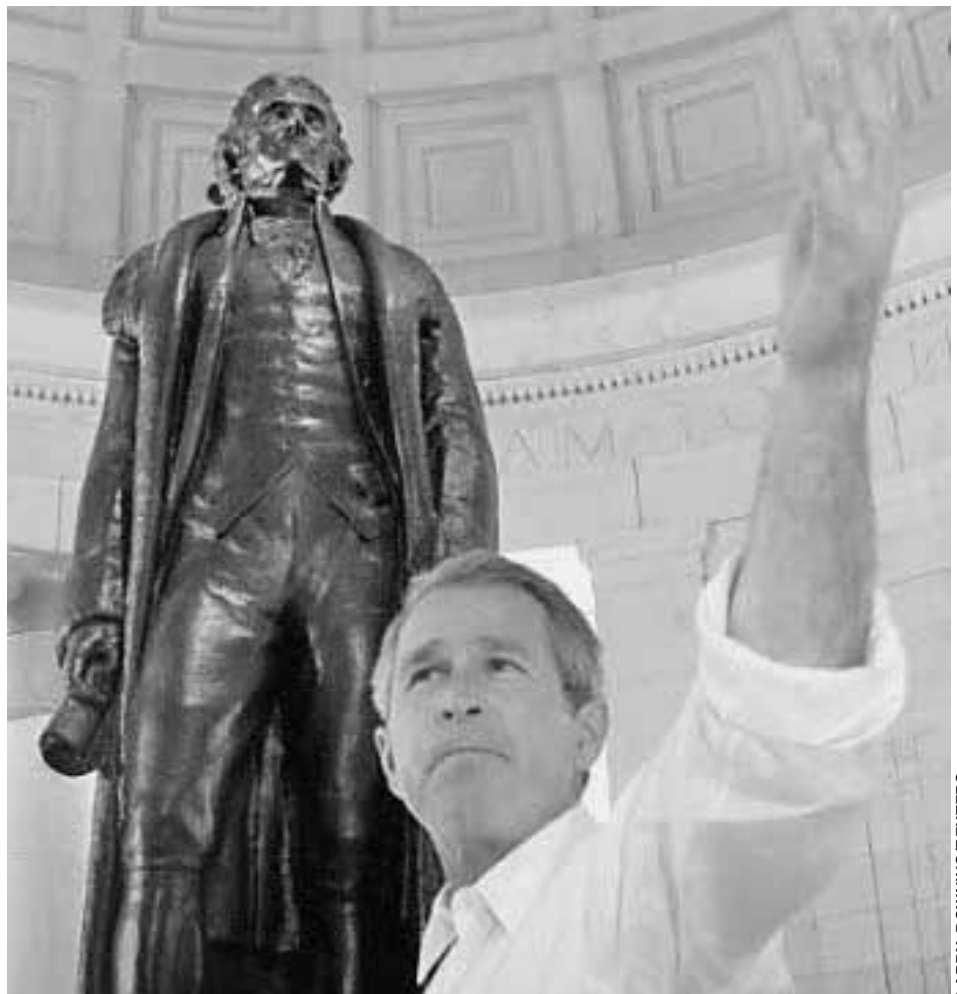
The Right to Work Bill would repeal the six provisions in federal labor law that authorize the firing of employees for refusal to pay union dues or so-called "agency fees."

For decades, polls have shown that the vast majority of Americans oppose forced unionism.

For example, a recent survey by Political/Media Research Inc. (Mason-Dixon) found that 77% of Americans agree employees should have the Right to Work regardless of their union status.

Right to Work Advocate Wins U.S. House Seat In Virginia 'Swing' District

On June 19, voters in Virginia's Fourth U.S. House District, a key "swing" seat



LARRY DOWNING/REUTERS

Today's leaders would display political wisdom by emulating Thomas Jefferson's active opposition to what he

called "sinful and tyrannical" forced contributions for private groups' "propagation of opinions."

that takes in most of the Tidewater region as well as flat lands south of the James River, became the latest to bear out such polls in a closely-watched election.

Avowed H.R.1109 proponent Randy Forbes (R), a state senator from Chesapeake, captured the seat, which had

been held for the past 18 years by Organized Labor-backed Democrat Norman Sisisky.

Mr. Sisisky, who died in March, openly opposed national Right to Work legislation.

See **Leadership** page 3

Right to Work States Fuel U.S. Economy

States That Bar Forced Union Dues Steadily Gain Good Jobs

A new report by the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) shows that Right to Work states paced U.S. economic growth throughout the nineties boom, just as they served as bulwarks of prosperity during the 1990-91 recession.

The BEA report reviews the real growth in gross state product (GSP) for the 50 states between 1992 and 1999.

GSP, the state counterpart to the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), is the market value of all the goods and services produced by labor and property located in a state.

Real GSP growth, which adjusts for inflation, is considered one of the best indicators of a state's economic vitality.

In "chained" dollars (an inflation-adjusting measure used by the BEA to account for the different goods and services produced in each state), Right to Work states' total real GSP grew by 38% from 1992-99, while total non-Right to Work GSP grew by just 29%.

The substantial Right to Work advantage revealed by the BEA in its June 4 report focuses only on the years since the last economic downturn.

Actually, this advantage was even more apparent during the last nationwide slowdown and lingering recession.

Between 1989 and 1992, constant-

dollar GSP in non-Right to Work states grew by a scant 1.8%, compared to 6.4% in Right to Work states.

"During good times and especially during bad times, the record shows that enacting a law to protect employees' Right to Work gives a state a competitive edge," said Matthew Leen, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

Federal Policy Promotes Compulsory Unionism, Stifles Workplace Innovation

The 21 Right to Work states protect employees from the federal labor-law provisions that authorize forced union dues.

Employees covered by Right to Work laws cannot be fired for refusing to pay dues or so-called "agency" fees to union officials whom federal bureaucrats have certified as their monopoly-bargaining agents.

In non-Right to Work states, where unencumbered federal forced-unionism policy authorizes such firings, productivity, wage, and overall income growth are stunted as a consequence.

Big Labor's use of rigid work rules and cultivation of the "hate the boss" mentality to cement its power over employees are the predictable consequences of federally-

sanctioned union monopoly.

State Right to Work laws empower independent-minded employees to fight back against irresponsible and tyrannical union bosses by withholding their financial support.

"When each employee has freedom of choice, union bosses are forced to tone down their disruptive class warfare," said Mr. Leen.

"Employees then have a much better chance of reaching their full productive potential and reaping the benefits. That's why almost every economic indicator shows that Right to Work and economic growth go hand and hand.

"So much so that, over the past decade, a net total of roughly five million Americans moved from forced-unionism states to Right to Work states."

National Right to Work Law Needed to Safeguard National Prosperity


"The propensity of Big Labor puppet politicians to look you in the eye and pretend not to be aware of the mountain of evidence in favor of Right to Work would be laughable if it weren't such a serious matter," continued Mr. Leen.

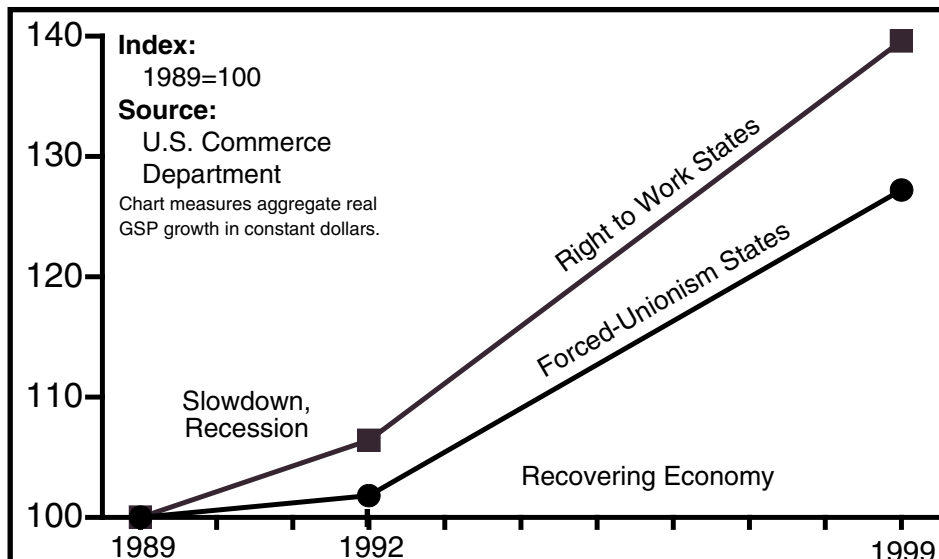
"Year in and year out, pro-forced unionism federal policy undercuts economic growth across most of the country.

"And, of course, employees and employers in Right to Work states are also harmed by the damage done to their customers and suppliers in non-Right to Work states."

To mend federal labor policy, U.S. Rep. Bob Goodlatte and U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, now joined by 73 cosponsors, have put before Congress the National Right to Work Act (H.R.1109/S.873), which would repeal all federally-imposed forced union dues.

"The freedom conferred upon employees in Right to Work states has proven to be a boon for all citizens -- employees, employers, consumers and taxpayers," said Mr. Leen.

"In today's intensely competitive global economy, it would be a terrible mistake for Congress to fail to extend the economic advantages of Right to Work to all Americans." 



Growth in Real Gross State Product

The record shows that Right to Work states' economic performance consistently outmatches that of

states that don't protect workers from federally-imposed forced union dues.

Leadership, a Matter of Principle

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Heeding the requests of Right to Work supporters in the district, Mr. Forbes drew a stark contrast between his position and that of his rival for the open seat, state Sen. Louise Lucas (D-Portsmouth), on the forced-unionism issue.

Mr. Forbes gladly responded to his National Right to Work Committee candidate survey, vowing to cosponsor and seek roll-call votes on H.R.1109 and to oppose Big Labor power grabs.

Mrs. Lucas refused to answer her Committee candidate survey.

And pro-Right to Work citizens were outraged by her state Senate votes in favor of so-called "meet and confer" bills that would have authorized quasi-negotiations between school boards and teacher union bosses, paving the way for public-sector monopoly bargaining in Virginia.

In Wake of Forbes Victory, GOP Leaders Are Urged To Forsake 'Obstructionism'

Committee Vice President John Tate noted that union-label House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.) has made a few dozen "swing" seats such as Virginia's Fourth the focus of his efforts to take over as majority leader of the chamber.

"Mr. Gephardt was determined to hand this race to Mrs. Lucas, and political experts agree that get-out-the-vote drives bankrolled by the Big Labor and Democratic machines were very effective," recalled Mr. Tate.

"Nonetheless, she lost, albeit by fewer than 6000 votes.

"Mr. Forbes won because he refused to be intimidated by the union bosses. The straightforward, uncompromising positions he took on politically potent issues like Right to Work helped mobilize like-minded citizens across the district.

"Now he has joined nearly 200 other self-identified Right to Work supporters in Congress.

"GOP House leaders should heed the lesson of Mr. Forbes' victory, reverse their years-old policy of obstructionism, and schedule immediate public hearings and roll-call votes on the Right to Work Bill."

The recent Beltway GOP fiasco in which Vermont Sen. Jim Jeffords

defected from the party and announced that he would henceforth caucus with Democrats, thus handing them Senate control, highlights the need for GOP leaders to focus on winning issues like Right to Work.

Failure to Challenge Big Labor Privileges Probably Cost GOP Senate Majority

The Jeffords defection was the immediate cause of the switch in party control of the Senate, but the underlying cause was GOP leaders' decision over the past four years to play defense instead of promoting a wide-ranging, positive legislative agenda.

Prior to the defection, the majority leadership had for several years sought to appease the GOP's "Jeffords wing" by burying supposedly "controversial" legislation like Right to Work that the "Jeffords wing" opposed.

Mr. Tate cited as an example Senate GOP leaders' decision to reject the fall 1998 request by then-Sen. Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.), a staunch Right to Work supporter in the middle of a brutal re-election battle, for a floor vote on the Thurmond-Sessions Freedom from Union Violence Act (now S.902).

This legislation would close the loophole in federal law that currently exempts union boss-orchestrated extortionate violence from prosecution when it is committed pursuant to so-

called "legitimate union objectives."

"Had Mr. Faircloth's request to lead Right to Work forces in a floor fight over Thurmond-Sessions been honored, it could have made the difference and enabled him to defeat his Big Labor-backed Democratic opponent, John Edwards," stated Mr. Tate.

"The fact is, protecting the Right to Work and cracking down on union violence are more than good policy -- they're good politics.

"By downplaying issues like these that the 'Jeffords wing' wanted to exclude, GOP leaders have likely cost themselves two or more Senate seats, and thus set up Mr. Jeffords to break a 50-50 deadlock by switching to an 'Independent.' "

President Bush Urged To Lead the Way

Mr. Tate suggested that President Bush use his "bully pulpit" to encourage GOP congressional leaders to push for floor votes on the Right to Work Bill and the Freedom from Union Violence Act in the near future.

Right to Work members who wish to contact Mr. Bush can do so through the White House comment line, 202-456-6213.

"Burying Right to Work-related issues only benefits the union bosses and their favored politicians," said Mr. Tate.

"Unless GOP leaders get this message, all the gains Right to Work supporters in Congress have made in recent years could be wiped out in the 2002 elections." 📧



Newly-elected Rep. Randy Forbes' (R-Va.) clear stands on winning issues like Right to Work mobilized his supporters.

Union Bosses the Villains in State's Energy Tragedy

San Francisco Business Times
(San Francisco, Calif.)

Guest Opinion by Eric Christen
July 13, 2001

For those wondering why the fifth-largest economy in the world is suffering from Third-World type power shortages there is increasingly a simple one-word answer: Unions.

On June 22 the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power announced that it was going to put out to bid again its huge new power plant in Sun Valley, delaying construction for at least six months.

The reasoning for this outrageous decision, a decision that comes at [a] time when California is looking for every megawatt of power it can get?

Simple: Construction unions didn't like the fact that The Industrial Co., a merit-shop company and one of the largest power plant contractors in the country, was about to be awarded the \$239 million bid.

Determining that the world just isn't big enough for anyone who doesn't subscribe to their limited worldview (belong to a union), they decided to protest the bid.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power of course caved in to these adolescent demands delaying the arrival of over 300 megawatts of much-

needed energy for at least six more months.

Construction Union Bosses' Exclusionary Goal: Leave Workers With No Choice

As the union share of the construction work force has declined from over 80 percent to under 18 percent today, it has become evident to some on the union side that the only way to stop this bleeding is to live by the motto:

"If you can't beat 'em, exclude 'em."

The tool that the unions have used to accomplish this is what is known as a Project Labor Agreement (PLA), an agreement that is now in place on many of the new power plants being built in California.

PLAs accomplish the union's exclusionary goal by placing within them provisions that force all workers to have to essentially join the union in order to work on the job.

Merit-shop companies look at such provisions being forced upon them and take their business elsewhere, leaving the field wide-open for those unions

unable to otherwise compete.

Since most of the power plants in California are built privately, the unions have created a front group known as CURE, California Unions for Reliable Energy, to handle such cases.

CURE, a law firm in San Francisco, having secured for itself what is known as an Intervener status with the California Energy Commission, uses its position to threaten holding up permits for private power providers with environmental lawsuits.

This "greenmail" can go on for months, and stops only after these companies decide to sign a PLA and build their plants union-only.

Of course, all concerns for the environment disappear once the PLA has been signed and the union greenmail has served its purpose.

It's quite a scam, a scam that has forced many of these power plants we are so desperately waiting for to have their permits delayed for months, if not years, which in turn has forced all of us to suffer.

Consumers Are Also Paying the Cost

Forcing power plants out to bid again just so you can exclude merit-shop contractors from getting work is pathetic enough.

Costing a state billions of dollars and forcing its citizens to suffer through rolling blackouts to achieve this end is criminal.

Is it any wonder why this once proud segment of the industry has collapsed, holding onto whatever it has left by way of extortion?

The next time your lights go out and your sitting in the dark pondering how this could happen in California in 2001, here's a suggestion: Just look for the union label.

Eric Christen is the executive director of the Fairfield-based Coalition for Fair Employment in Construction, a statewide organization comprising union and non-union companies, created to stop the spread of Project Labor Agreements. 📧



Assisted by California's Big Labor politicians, union bosses have imposed "union-only" rules on power plant

construction, costing consumers billions and helping to spawn the energy crisis.

Big Labor Missouri Governor Rules by Edict

Right to Work Proponents Will Fight Back in Legislature, Courts

On June 29, Big Labor Missouri Gov. Bob Holden (D) delighted the union bosses who have for years unsuccessfully tried to ram through the state's General Assembly legislation empowering them to force public employees to pay union dues, or be fired.

Implementing a scheme that currently hasn't got majority support in either legislative chamber, Mr. Holden signed an executive order authorizing union bosses to grab "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining privileges over 54% of state employees.

As a result of this edict, 30,000 employees at state agencies including Corrections, Social Services, and others, will almost certainly be forced, whether they are union members or not, to work under terms negotiated by union bosses.

In practice, dissenting employees' sole alternative will be to quit their jobs.

Independent-minded state employees will be stripped of any freedom to negotiate on their own behalf.

Forced-Dues Provision Evidently Contradicts Missouri Labor Statute

And Mr. Holden's edict compounds the injustice of union monopoly bargaining by granting union czars claim to a portion of each employee's paycheck as tribute for this forced "representation."

"Until the Holden order was issued, nearly 15,000 of the affected employees had chosen not to join any union," noted Reed Larson, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Now the bosses of Local 72 of the giant American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees [AFSCME/AFL-CIO] union are licking their chops over the prospect of collecting forced dues or so-called 'agency fees' from all of these employees.

"That's a forced-dues windfall of roughly \$9 million a year -- effectively provided by Gov. Holden with the stroke of a pen.

No wonder Big Labor bosses promptly thanked Mr. Holden for the order by sending him \$40,000 to help pay the bills for the lavish inaugural parties he had thrown in January. Undoubtedly, that's just a down payment."

Mr. Holden acted in apparent disregard for Missouri labor law, which permits the government only to "agree with any [state] employee" to deduct union dues from his or her paycheck -- not to deduct them against the individual employee's will.

"The Right to Work Committee and its Missouri members will fight this extra-legal, and possibly illegal, edict with all their might," said Mr. Larson.

Similar Forced-Dues Edict In Indiana Now Being Resisted in State Court

Mr. Holden is not the first governor to try to extract forced union dues from public employees by executive order.

Four years ago, his fellow Midwestern Big Labor lackey Gov. Frank O'Bannon (D-Ind.) issued a similar order that forces Hoosier state employees subject to union monopoly bargaining to pay union dues, or risk being sued by union lawyers.

While public outrage over this shakedown temporarily deterred government union bosses from taking advantage of the O'Bannon edict, last December Norma Murphy of Indianapolis and 12 other state employees became the first to be sued for failure to pay forced dues.

Attorneys for the Committee's sister organization, the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, are representing Ms. Murphy and her colleagues in cohort.



Paying backhanded tribute to the effectiveness of Right to Work's grass-roots lobbying, Big Labor Govs. Bob

"There is serious doubt about whether either of the two forced-dues power grabs is legal," said Mr. Larson.

"However, in case one or both are ultimately upheld in court, the Committee is now working with pro-Right to Work legislators in both states to overturn them by statute."


Committee Lobbying Strength Spurs Big Labor Governors' Resort to Rule by Edict

Mr. Larson pointed out that the very fact that two union-label governors are now resorting to rule by fiat to get their forced-unionism agenda implemented is a tribute to Right to Work supporters' growing clout in state legislatures.

(Yet another Big Labor governor, Kentucky Democrat Paul Patton, imposed a limited form of union monopoly bargaining over state workers by executive order in May.)

"Thanks to persistent and persuasive grass-roots lobbying by millions of Committee members and supporters, the union machine's campaigns to spread the forced-unionism system are sputtering in many state legislatures," said Mr. Larson.

"As harmful as these forced-dues executive orders are, they show time is not on Big Labor's side."

To find out more about the Committee's state legislative program to stop monopoly bargaining and forced union dues, contact C.J. Tosto, legislative liaison, at 703-321-9820. 



Holden (D-Mo.) and Frank O'Bannon (D-Ind.) are trying to impose forced union dues by executive order.

Union Brass Out of Step With Schoolteachers

Few Back NEA War on Vouchers, But Their Forced Dues Bankroll It

A recent confidential survey commissioned by the National Education Association (NEA) teacher union empire shows that most NEA-"represented" teachers believe the union hierarchy has jumbled priorities in the debate over school reform.

For decades, NEA bosses have made the total defeat of school vouchers, which allow parents to use public education funds to send their children to the school of their choice, second only to the spread of teacher forced unionism on their lobbying agenda.

At their July 2000 convention, NEA chiefs imposed a \$12.5 million-a-year hike in teachers' and other school employees' union dues (which they are forced to pay as job condition under 20 state laws) to fight state voucher initiatives.

Early this year, NEA lobbyists pulled out all the stops to eliminate the tiny, experimental voucher component in President Bush's lavishly-funded education proposal.

With the help of NEA-puppet senators and congressmen, the NEA lobbyists easily succeeded.

But last month a private education watchdog group, citing a leaked copy of a confidential survey commissioned by the NEA brass, reported that a solid majority of NEA-"represented" employees don't support the NEA chiefs' anti-voucher jihad.

Three-Fifths of NEA Members Say Voucher Issue Is 'Not . . . Important' to Them

In a July 2 report, Mike Antonucci, director of the California-based Education Intelligence Agency (EIA), wrote that as part of the survey "NEA members were read a list of public education issues 'that NEA might address in the coming year.'"

Mr. Antonucci noted that a "stunning" 39% of NEA members said it is "'not at all important'" for the NEA to address the voucher issue, while another 22% thought it is "'not very important.'"

"Regardless of their opinion on vouchers, most NEA members, including both voluntary members and many others corralled into an unwanted union, don't feel threatened by them," said Cathy Jones, director of Concerned Educators Against Forced Unionism.



Rep. J.C. Watts (R-Okla., right) greets Mississippian Mike McNece at a reception for independent educators.

This pro-Right to Work group is often referred to by the acronym CEAUFU. It is housed in the same building as the National Right to Work Committee, but separate from it.

Ms. Jones observed that the leaked survey illustrates how forced unionism distorts the public debate over school reform:

"The 33 state laws that force teachers to accept union bosses as their monopoly-bargaining agents in contract talks, as well as the 20 laws authorizing teacher forced dues, tilt the odds against many promising reform proposals.

"NEA power brokers funnel millions of dollars in dues confiscated from educators to amass huge war chests to defeat not just vouchers, but also merit pay, alternative certification, independent charter schools, additional compensation for hard-to-fill math and science positions, and much more.

"As the NEA bosses' own pollster has just confirmed, the NEA rank-and-file see no need for this war against school reform.

"Unfortunately, the vast majority of teachers live in states whose labor laws authorize their dismissal for refusal to accept a union boss as their 'exclusive' bargaining agent. Therefore, all too often, teachers' opinions don't matter."

Mr. Antonucci, whose online *Communiqué* column and research reports (available at <http://members.aol.com/educintel/eia>) are revered by education reformers, was the star speaker at CEAUFU's annual seminar this summer.

The 2001 seminar began at the Old

Executive Office Building in Washington, D.C., June 20 with a visit to the office of Nina Shokraii-Rees, a key education advisor to Vice President Cheney.

Summer Seminar Helps Independent-Minded Teachers Resist the NEA Hierarchy

Many of CEAUFU's guests were leaders of independent teacher organizations who have earned reputations as insightful, constructive voices at state and local education-policy forums.

They represent over 225,000 teacher members of independent educator groups in 19 states, in addition to four national teacher organizations.

"Independent teacher groups form a key part of the school-reform coalition," said Ms. Jones.

"Unlike power-hungry NEA union bosses, leaders from independent groups don't want any forced unionism privileges. Membership in these groups is strictly voluntary."

In addition to hearing from and exchanging ideas with Ms. Shokraii-Rees, Mr. Antonucci, and other luminaries, seminar participants were greeted by congressional members and staff at a Rayburn House Office Building reception.

"CEAUFU's annual seminar is the centerpiece of its program, which is designed to inform teachers, school administrators, parents, and other citizens about the harmful effects of forced unionism in schools," said Ms. Jones.

"I'm confident the independent teacher representatives and other education leaders who attended this summer's seminar have returned to their respective states better prepared to combat the NEA union juggernaut than ever before.

"Abolishing or at least reining in union monopoly is a necessary precondition for education reform.

"It's not a guarantee that reform will succeed.

"But as long as a state's politicians continue to promote teacher union monopoly and actively discourage alternatives, effective reform is impossible."

If you or someone you know is interested in signing up for next summer's CEAUFU seminar, please contact Cathy Jones at 703-321-8519. 📞

Campaign 'Reform' Backer Lets the Truth Slip Out

Admits 'Soft' Money Ban Exempts Huge Forced-Dues Slush Fund

For years, backers of phony campaign-finance "reform" schemes similar to this year's Shays-Meehan Bill (H.R.380, recently reintroduced as H.R. 2356), now at least temporarily stalled in the House, pretended that Big Labor's forced-dues political slush fund didn't even exist.

Every reasonably well-informed political observer, including many who are sympathetic to Big Labor, knows that each federal election year union bosses pour hundreds of millions of dollars in dues money that workers are forced by federal and state law to pay as a job condition into electioneering activities.

While a small part of this forced-dues "soft" money is given to political party committees, the vast majority goes directly into union phone banks, get-out-the-vote drives, mailings, and other efforts to assist Big Labor-favored candidates.

Shays-Meehan and its Senate counterpart, McCain-Feingold (S.27), would completely prohibit "soft" contributions to party committees for these very activities.

But neither bill even purports to stop Big Labor from commandeering workers' forced dues for electioneering activities.

Up to now, campaign "reformers" have simply glossed over the facts to avoid explaining their desire to bar voluntary "soft" party contributions from individuals, businesses and groups, while protecting Big Labor's much larger, forced-dues slush fund.

For example, union-label S.27 backers such as Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.), Ted Kennedy and John Kerry (both D-Mass.) claim, in effect, that PAC and reported

party "soft" donations constitute the whole of Big Labor campaign spending.

Last month, however, a key House proponent of campaign "reform" admitted this claim is far from accurate.

John Lewis: Big Labor 'Would Still Be Able to Use' Forced Dues For Electioneering

In a July 10 op-ed for the Washington Post, eight-term Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), a fervent apologist for forced unionism and, as a chief deputy whip for his party, a key cosponsor of Shays-Meehan, let the cat out of the bag.

Under this bill, he wrote, union bosses and the nonunion groups they bankroll "would still be able to use their organizational [i.e., forced-dues] funds on . . . voter registration and get-out the vote activities."

Mr. Lewis continued, "The fact is that the efforts of these groups are contributing to increased . . . turnout [for Big Labor-endorsed candidates] much more than is party soft money."

"Congressman Lewis got it exactly right," said Mr. Mark Mix, senior vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"The estimated value of unreported forced-dues spending in the 2000 federal campaigns is \$800 million. That would make Big Labor's forced-dues stash 60% bigger than all reported 'soft' donations to GOP and Democratic national party committees combined!"

Clearly, it is neither logical nor fair to outlaw voluntary party "soft" money while protecting union bosses' power to bankroll most electioneering activities



WWW.HOUSE.GOV/JOHNLEWIS

Big Labor Rep. John Lewis: Forced-dues electioneering contributes "much more" than "party soft money."

that "soft" money now pays for with union dues confiscated from workers.

"Thanks to the stellar efforts of Right to Work members and other like-minded Americans, the public is beginning to see that 'reformers' true purpose is to rig election law even further in union-label politicians' favor," said Mr. Mix.

Heightened Public Scrutiny Could Ultimately Derail Phony 'Reform' Juggernaut

"Sensing that growing public opposition might prevent House passage of H.R.2356 last month, Big Labor politicians concocted a procedural quibble to get the bill off the floor so that they could try again later," Mr. Mix noted.

"If top sponsors Chris Shays [R-Conn.] and Marty Meehan [D-Mass.] succeed in getting this bill back to the floor, Right to Work supporters should ask them:

"How can you claim this bill gets "soft" money out of politics, when your ally John Lewis admits it doesn't?"

"As Mr. Lewis sees all too well, the aim of H.R.2356 is actually to magnify the role of forced-dues 'soft' money in the political process and defund opponents of forced unionism.

"Since the public is now getting wise to what this bill is all about, its prospects for passage are significantly diminished."

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Fired California Farm Workers Fight Back

Fruit Pickers Who Were Terminated For Refusing to Join Union File Suit

Under a "sweetheart" deal struck between the Watsonville, Calif.-based Coastal Berry Co. and the United Farm Workers (UFW/AFL-CIO) union hierarchy this spring, more than 150 berry workers were almost immediately fired from their jobs.

The mass firings were proceeding while the union contract, covering 700 Coastal Berry workers in Oxnard, Calif., was being hailed as a "breakthrough agreement" by UFW czar Arturo Rodriguez, who was quoted in the AFL-CIO's online newsletter.

According to the *Ventura County Star*, this "breakthrough" contract offers wage increases significantly lower than current inflation over the next three years.

And even the UFW press release bragging about the deal did not point to any new insurance, pension, or other material benefits for workers in the package.

Fired Farm Worker: 'We Want To Be Free and Work Like We Were Working Before'

So what is the contract "breakthrough" that the UFW bosses and their AFL-CIO union patrons were crowing about?

Obviously, they were referring to the provision that mandates the firing of berry workers who refuse to join the UFW.

Big Labor hopes to intimidate California's estimated 700,000 farm workers with this forced-unionism provision and the manifest willingness of Coastal Berry, the world's largest strawberry producer, to use it ruthlessly against non-UFW workers.

But so far the more than 150 fired Coastal Berry workers in Oxnard, plus an additional 150 workers who have confirmed through their signatures they don't want UFW union-boss "representation," refuse to be intimidated.

Jesus Medina, one of the fired farm workers, explained to the *Star* that they did not want to join the UFW or sign a so-called "dues authorization" form that did not even specify how much dues they would be forced to pay.

"We want to be free and work like



ATLANTIC MONTHLY

Recent Big Labor-instigated mass firings of more than 150 berry workers in Oxnard, Calif., are illegal even under

were working before," said Mr. Medina.

After the mass firings had already begun, UFW bosses faxed Coastal Berry a letter claiming that forced dues would amount to 2% of workers' wages—meaning the entire wage "increase" in the first year of the contract would go into union coffers.

Since the 2% figure isn't part of the contract, many workers suspected that if they signed an authorization they would ultimately be charged even more.

Pro-Right to Work California state Sen. Tom McClintock (R-Thousand Oaks), whose legislative district includes Oxnard, expressed outrage at the UFW bosses' cruelty and hypocrisy:

"Ironically, the UFW claims to be for workers, yet it turned more than 150 workers away from the fields where they have labored for years."

Right to Work Attorneys Assist Fired Workers

Farm workers are not subject to the forced-unionism provisions in federal labor law, but in California they may be corralled into unions under the state's oppressive 1975 farm labor forced-unionism law.

The late Cesar Chavez, father-in-law of Arturo Rodriguez and his predecessor as UFW commandante, was the architect of this law.

However, the recent mass firings of non-UFW workers in Oxnard go beyond



UFW

the state's intensely pro-forced unionism farm labor statute, concocted by the late union commandante Cesar Chavez.

even what this intensely pro-forced unionism statute can permit.

In its 1988 *Beck* decision, argued and won by National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation attorneys, the U.S. Supreme Court put limits on the dues that workers may be forced to pay as a job condition unless they are protected by a Right to Work law.

Specifically, the High Court ruled that workers may never be forced to pay for politics, lobbying, organizing, union social events and conventions, extra-unit litigation, and more.

Subsequent High Court rulings have found that *Beck's* limits on forced-dues assessments are required under the First Amendment, which means they apply to workers under all federal and state forced-unionism laws.

But UFW barons admit they ordered the firing of the berry workers in Oxnard for refusal to pay full union dues.

Assisted by Right to Work attorneys, fired workers filed a class-action suit against the UFW hierarchy June 28.

"It's appalling that California law forces tens of thousands of farm workers to bankroll an unwanted union in order to earn a living," said Mark Mix, senior vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"But it's inspiring that so many brave farm workers are banding together to stop the UFW kingpins from grabbing even more forced-dues loot than the law can permit." 📣