

Hotel Union Bosses 5, California Taxpayers 0

Big Labor-'Friendly' Tribal Gambling Pacts Dismay 'Governator' Fans

During the fall 2003 campaign that ended with California voters' extraordinary recall of Big Labor Gov. Gray Davis (D) and the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) as his successor, the world-famous Hollywood actor made a major issue of the Indian-tribe gambling pacts Mr. Davis had negotiated in 1999.

Mr. Davis had failed to stand up for California taxpayers while cutting deals with more than 60 tribes, charged Mr. Schwarzenegger.

He vowed that as governor he would renegotiate the pacts to ensure that tribes that profit from their state-protected monopoly on Nevada-style gambling in California provide the government with much more revenue in exchange for the privilege.

Mr. Schwarzenegger's promise resonated well with beleaguered citizens who were being warned the state faced possible bankruptcy, but didn't want to see their already onerous state-and-local tax burden get any heavier.

'Foisting "Card-Check" Forced Unionism on Indian Tribes Won't Benefit California'

This summer, Gov. Schwarzenegger has begun to make good on his promise to renegotiate the gambling pacts.

Unfortunately for taxpayers, looking after their interests no longer seems a primary objective in this renegotiation.

Apparently unwilling in this instance to stand up to union-label legislative leaders, the Schwarzenegger Administration has just negotiated five pacts whose clear priority is helping Big Labor secure "exclusive" bargaining privileges at tribal casinos, not collecting more revenue for the state.

The five tribes will pay the state an estimated total of \$150 million to \$200 million a year, or 5% to 6.5% of their estimated total revenue -- far less than the 15% share the Administration previously said it planned to get.

At the same time, union officials, primarily hotel union bosses, will gain the power to force tribal casino employees to accept a union as their "exclusive" bargaining agent solely through the acquisition of signed union authorization cards.

The deal explicitly requires that tribes



Five tribal gambling pacts recently signed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-Calif.) are terrific deals for

power-hungry union bosses, but offer the state far less revenue than expected.

consent to the forced unionization of casino employees through "card check."

The five pacts will thus help union organizers intimidate individual workers, under the organizers' watchful eyes, into signing themselves, and ultimately all their nonunion fellow employees, over to Big Labor control.

"The governor's first gambling pacts are a boon for hotel union bosses, but a bust for taxpayers," charged Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Foisting 'card-check' forced unionism on Indian tribes won't benefit ordinary Californians in any way. This is exactly the sort of special-interest deal that the 'Governator' had promised would be history once Gray Davis was gone."

Right to Work President Urges California Governor To Change Course Now

In an open letter mailed to Mr. Schwarzenegger, California legislators, and key media figures late last month, Mr. Mix urged a change of course:

"Even before you gave your seal of approval to 'card-check' forced unionism in the first five tribal gambling pacts you signed, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees union officials had begun a major drive to secure this objective," Mr. Mix noted.

"According to a 2003 *Los Angeles Times* report, union organizers are

allegedly repeatedly phoning employees, trailing them home, and knocking at their doors at all hours in order to wear them down until they sign union cards.

"Such cards, Big Labor claims, render any secret-ballot election unnecessary.

"Do you really consider this warped vision of employee 'free choice' fair for casino employees, or any other group of California employees for that matter?"

"The National Right to Work Committee and its 2.2 million members have a completely different perspective.

"We oppose union monopoly bargaining regardless of how it's imposed, and support the individual worker's freedom to decide whether to have a union bargain his or her contract.

"But even many apologists for monopoly bargaining admit it's wrong to use an insecure, abuse-laden process like the card check as a means of foisting union monopoly control on workers.

"A number of the tribes with which you have yet to renegotiate deals strongly oppose card checks, and are ready to offer the state substantially more revenue if you drop your efforts to impose them.

"Committee members in California and across the country urge you to accept this sensible offer, which is clearly in taxpayers' best interest."

Mr. Mix urged Committee members in California to call the governor's office at 916-445-2841 and ask him to stop promoting card-check forced unionism in tribal casinos. 📞