

Big Labor Machine Shreds Free Speech Rights

Millions of Workers Voted Against John Kerry, But Had to Bankroll Him

Roughly nine million members of union households voted for George W. Bush in the November presidential elections, but were at the same time forced to bankroll John F. Kerry's campaign with union dues money extracted out of their own or a family member's paycheck. This disturbing news underscores the importance of abolishing all forced union dues.

The fact is, the official 50-state presidential exit poll conducted by Edison Media Research and Mitofsky International (EMR/MI) for all major national news organizations shows that 40% of union household members voted for Mr. Bush.

(While the early afternoon exit polls reported to the media by EMR/MI and subsequently widely distributed over the Internet were famously inaccurate, experienced political observers consider the final exit polls to be highly credible.)

An estimated 11.4 million union household members voted to reelect the President.

Of these, roughly 82% -- or 9.3 million -- are either personally forced to pay union dues if they wish to keep their jobs, or have someone who is so coerced in their household.

"Once again, the union political machine shredded the free speech rights of millions of employees in 2004," charged Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"To many such union-'represented' workers and their family members, the fact that Big Labor did not succeed in

electing its hand-picked presidential candidate this time offers only partial consolation.

"Just like other Americans, union household members should have the right to choose personally which candidates, if any, they will financially support."

Federal law grants union officials extraordinary power over individual workers. Except in the 22 Right to Work states, federal law authorizes Big Labor to order the firing of any worker who refuses to fork over forced union dues or "fees."

Lies Help Union Bosses Rake In Hundreds of Millions of Dollars For Electioneering

But in theory, union bosses shouldn't be able to get away with using workers' forced-dues money to cancel out workers' votes.

Under court precedents won by the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, forced dues-paying workers who never join or resign from the union have the right to pay a forced, but reduced, union agency "fee" rather than full forced dues.

And objecting workers' forced "fees" are not supposed to be spent on politics or electioneering.

However, as countless Foundation cases show, union bosses routinely lie to workers. Many workers are falsely told they have to join the union or that they can't automatically resign. Others are threatened with legal or physical retaliation if they buck the union bosses.

Time and again, workers wind up by paying full dues to save their jobs. Meanwhile, the union political empire grows bigger and bigger.

Union Czar Admits: 'Regular, Dues-Paying Members' Finance Political Blitz

Just this summer, Andy Stern, president of the 1.7 million-member Service Employees International Union (SEIU/AFL-CIO), admitted to *Business Week* that 85% of a \$65 million electioneering fund the SEIU brass had deployed would be paid for with funds taken from "regular dues-paying members."

This hefty sum was spent, SEIU spokesmen acknowledged, deploying more than 2000 political organizers to "register and rally voters" in presidential "battleground states."


Forced-dues money covered the union organizers' salaries and benefits, as well as their travel and housing expenses. Forced-dues money also paid for the SEIU's political phone banks, propaganda mailings, and face-to-face workplace electioneering.

While the SEIU was one of just two AFL-CIO-affiliated unions to announce publicly how much union treasury money it would spend on politics this year, all 60 AFL-CIO affiliates joined in the union hierarchy's efforts to install John Kerry in the White House, according to AFL-CIO Political Director Karen Ackerman.

Altogether, Organized Labor's reported and unreported federal political spending this year came to at least \$925 million, or nearly a billion dollars, according to a conservative estimate recently made by the National Institute for Labor Relations Research.

(For details, see "the Union Political Machine in 2004" at www.nilrr.org -- the Institute's web site.)

"No citizen, whether it's a worker, a small businessman, a student, a housewife, or a retiree -- should be forced to bankroll efforts to elect the very candidate he or she is voting against," said Mr. Stafford.

"To stop such abuses, forced union dues must be abolished. This can be done through congressional approval of a national Right to Work law and through enactment of state Right to Work laws in all 50 states." 



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Service Employees International Union boss Andy Stern (left), AFL-CIO czar John Sweeney, and other union bigwigs

spent hundreds of millions of dollars in forced-dues money to elect Big Labor puppets like John Kerry.