



# NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK NEWSLETTER

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## Will Congress Stop Sanctioning Union Sabotage? *Notorious 'Salting' Tactic Helps Big Labor Grab More Forced Dues*



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**Through frivolous lawsuits and workplace sabotage that drain away the revenues of independent**

**contractors, union "salting" ultimately threatens the livelihoods of independent construction workers.**

With congressional support for Right to Work now at its highest level in decades, National Right to Work Committee members around the country are renewing their efforts to crack down on the extortionate union-boss tactic known as "salting."

Right to Work members are lobbying congressional leaders to allow hearings and votes on the Truth in Employment Act.

In the last Congress, this bill was introduced by Rep. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.), now a U.S. senator. The Committee is currently working with Capitol Hill allies to get a new version introduced soon.

The Truth in Employment Act would remove the federal authorization for Big Labor's salting of firms, usually small firms in the construction industry, with union militants.

### **Tactic's Aim: Either Impose Forced Unionism, or Cripple the Business**

The union militants, known as "salts," typically aim to do one of two things: Either force the firm's loyal employees to accept union monopoly bargaining and pay union dues, or inflict severe economic harm, even bankruptcy, on the

business.

Union bosses pay or simply order salts to apply for jobs so they can drum up so-called "unfair labor practice" charges and glean information to find and harass a firm's clients.

Salting is thus designed to blackmail employers into handing loyal employees over to Organized Labor bosses without the employees' consent.

### **'We Have Spent Over' \$500,000 'Defending Ourselves Against ... Groundless Attacks'**

Speaking last year before the House Subcommittee on Employer-Employee Relations, Shelly Runyan, the vice president of Titus Electrical Contracting, Inc., in Austin, Texas, testified about how salting works in practice.

She and her husband Ty started their firm in 1987 "out of the back of a 1971 Dodge Satellite," Mrs. Runyan recalled.

In late 2001, Titus became the electrical contractor at the construction site of the Parmer Events Center in Austin when the original, unionized contractor went bankrupt.

"Between November 2001 and March 2002 we had over 530 applicants for electrical positions. We hired 48 technicians during that time period, meaning that a given applicant had less than a one in 10 chance of getting a position with our company," noted Mrs. Runyan.

"In every instance, we hired the best applicant for the position, strictly adhering to established hiring procedures. Many of the people we hired were known union members. We did not and do not discriminate.

*See Salting next page*

# Salting Harms Employees, Consumers

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"Despite this, in almost every instance where a union member submitted [his or her] name, the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, or IBEW, Local 520] union filed an unfair labor practices complaint against us, knowing that we had only a few positions open, and hundreds of applicants . . .

"The fact is, they were intentionally filing groundless complaints in an effort to bankrupt Titus Electrical for having the audacity to take over a 'union job.'

"We have spent over HALF A MILLION DOLLARS in legal fees, not to mention the cost of lost productivity, defending ourselves against the groundless attacks of the IBEW."

## 'Sabotaged and Concealed Electrical Work' Caused 'An Electrical Explosion'

"Worse yet," the National Labor Relations Board [NLRB] furnished "implicit cooperation and support" for these attacks, Mrs. Runyan concluded.

The experiences she described were far from extraordinary.

In fact, a manual drafted several years ago for the IBEW explicitly calls salting "necessary to cause the employer to sign an agreement [forcing employees into the union], raise prices," or "scale back his business activities."

Employers who refuse to be blackmailed ought eventually to "go out of business," says the union manual.

Especially as interpreted by the NLRB, the federal sanction for union salting threatens employees and consumers as well as businesses, Mrs. Runyan testified:

"Salts are often intentionally disruptive and combative. While employed by us, we have had salts physically assault our Team Members, they have been arrested off our job sites, and we have lost customers because of them.

"They have intentionally sabotaged and concealed electrical work, in one case causing an electrical explosion. And yet, when [thuggish salts were] terminated, invariably the NLRB would attempt to prosecute charges against us for legitimate terminations."

## Committee President Testified Before Small Business Panel

The bitter experiences of Titus and countless other small and mid-sized firms and their employees underscores the foolishness of current federal labor law's premise that salts are the same as ordinary job seekers.

Committee President Mark Mix dissected this fallacy in testimony he delivered before a House Small Business subcommittee in February 2004. "Federal

law authorizes the termination of conscientious employees who resist paying union dues," he noted recently.

"At the same time, it bars 'discrimination' against so-called 'job seekers' who openly vow to put a firm out of business if it doesn't foist an unwanted union on employees. This is topsy-turvy logic.

"The Truth in Employment Act is a significant step toward restoring some common sense to current federal labor law. It wouldn't end federally-imposed forced unionism, which is the root of the problem.

"But it would allow employers to refuse to hire union saboteurs who are charged by Big Labor bosses with forcing longtime, loyal employees to accept monopoly union representation."

A letter from Mr. Mix to tens of thousands of Committee members, posted early this month, urges them to sign and return petitions calling on their representatives and senators to pledge support for and seek votes on the Truth in Employment Act.

Mr. Mix believes that, thanks to Committee members' recent success in building Right to Work strength on Capitol Hill, there is reason to hope this bill can be passed by Congress and signed by President Bush this year.

But first it will be necessary to mobilize "a tidal wave of public support" for this legislation, cautioned Mr. Mix.

## Massive Mail, Phone And Media Programs Needed to Enlist Support

In his letter, Mr. Mix outlined a plan to contact hundreds of thousands of potential anti-salting activists, brief the most influential and sympathetic members of the media, deploy field representatives to the hometowns of fence-sitting politicians, and air hard-hitting, targeted TV and radio ads.

"Winning passage of the Truth in Employment Act would pave the way for the Committee's top objective, passage of national Right to Work legislation repealing all federally-imposed forced union dues and 'fees,'" said Mr. Mix.

"That's why I'm counting on Right to Work members everywhere to be generous in dedicating their energy and resources to this project."

As a first, critical step, Mr. Mix urged members to sign and return to Committee headquarters petitions in opposition to salting extortion as soon as they receive them. 📞



**Big Labor politicians like Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) will go all out to defeat legislation that would curtail**

**union "salting" abuses. Only a massive Right to Work mobilization can overcome this opposition.**

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