

Why Companies Kowtow to Big Labor 'Card Checks'

Taxpayer Money Used to Browbeat Hotel/Convention Center Operator

Today, when Big Labor launches a campaign to secure monopoly-bargaining privileges over a group of employees, it typically employs "card check/neutrality" tactics.

This means that, before union organizers even begin talking to employees, they demand in advance that the employer acquiesce to a deal under which union officials can force employees to accept the union as their "exclusive" bargaining agent solely through the acquisition of union authorization cards.

Of course, a card that is signed under union organizers' peering eyes is far from a reliable indicator of an employee's real views regarding unionization.

The card-check system thus helps union organizers intimidate individual workers into signing themselves, and ultimately all their nonunion fellow employees, over to union-boss control.

Monopoly Bargaining's Harmful Impact on Labor Relations, Profits Is Well Documented

Card checks frequently go in tandem with misleadingly named "neutrality agreements," which typically require employers to help union officials secure power by making the installation of a monopoly-bargaining regime seem a foregone conclusion.

Since union monopoly bargaining's intensely harmful impact on labor-management relations and profits is well-documented, it's appropriate to ask why any private employer in his or her right mind would acquiesce to a card-check/"neutrality" deal.

The answer is a combination of Big Labor economic intimidation and abuse of government power. In many instances, union-label politicians wield taxpayer dollars to force employers to consent to card checks and "neutrality."

The ongoing case of the Marriott hotel located at the Adriaen's Landing development project in downtown Hartford, Conn., illustrates both of these abuses of taxpayers' money.

Several years ago, the state of Connecticut appointed the Waterford Group, a firm that builds, operates and owns hospitality industry facilities in nine states, as master developer of the

Adriaen's Landing project. As part of the project, Waterford built the 409-room Marriott Hartford Downtown, the first new full-service hotel to be built in the city in more than two decades.

Hartford officials granted Waterford \$30 million in taxpayer-funded incentives to take on the Adriaen's Landing project, which is expected to bring more than \$1 billion to the city.

'We Are Concerned That There Is No Labor Peace Agreement in Effect'

In return for the incentives, state and local politicians now say that Waterford must, in accord with a city ordinance, sign a so-called "labor peace agreement," and thus effectively acquiesce to card check/"neutrality," at the Marriott.

Waterford is also under pressure to acquiesce to card check/"neutrality" at the adjoining Connecticut Convention Center, which it also operates.

Early this year, officers of UNITE HERE Local 217, which is seeking monopoly-bargaining privileges over Marriott employees, and the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), which is targeting the convention center, wrote Hartford's Economic Development Authority to express their displeasure:

"We are concerned that there is no labor peace agreement in effect for the operations" at Adriaen's Landing, began the letter, which called on Economic Development Authority Chairman Bill McCue and Executive Director Annette Sanderson to intervene.

In response, Waterford officers have asserted that Hartford's "labor peace" ordinance does not cover the Adriaen's Landing project, and refused to acquiesce to a card check.

Ban on Card-Check Forced Unionism Would Be a Step In the Right Direction

Union officials have retaliated by orchestrating an elaborate PR campaign designed to blacken the reputation of the Marriott and the convention center and discourage businesses and individuals from patronizing either facility.

The two top leaders of the Connecticut House of Representatives,

Speaker James Amann (D-Milford) and Majority Leader Christopher Donovan (D-Meriden), have written to Waterford Chairman and CEO Len Wolman to inform him of their intent to join boycotts of the hotel and the convention center.


Big Labor-funded "civic" groups like the Universal Health Care Foundation, as well as a number of naïve religious leaders, have also indicated they will support boycotts unless and until Waterford signs "labor peace" deals.

"Even if the Waterford Group withstands the pressure campaign now being waged, the Hartford case illustrates how the interplay of federal, state and local policies frequently stacks the deck in favor of card-check forced unionism," said National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix.

"Employers who kowtow to card checks rarely if ever do so because it makes good business sense. Either they are coerced with taxpayers' money, or they are intimidated by pickets, boycotts, and other Big Labor bully tactics.

"The best solution to the card-check problem is to repeal the federal labor-law provisions that authorize union bosses to act as a group of employees' monopoly-bargaining agent in contract negotiations.

"Without the potential for getting a monopoly, union bosses would have no incentive to wage a card-check campaign.

"But as a first step, Congress should pass H.R.874 or S.1173. These pending bills would make it harder for union bosses to seize monopoly power by banning all card checks." 



DAVID BACON

Hotel union bosses like John Wilhelm are using taxpayers' money to promote card-check forced unionism.