



NATIONAL RIGHT TO WORK NEWSLETTER

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Right to Work PAC Targets Critical Contests *Fund Contributes Exclusively to Pro-Right to Work Candidates*

Speaking in late June to an audience that consisted mostly of paid, full-time union bosses and staff members, as well as an assortment of their most militant followers, Big Labor-backed U.S. Senate candidate Jon Tester (D-Mont.) laid it on the line:

"The simple fact is, guys like me can't get elected without folk like you.

"Yes, I need your money, but more importantly, I need your labor and I need your support."

To understand the full significance of Mr. Tester's comments, made in his keynote address to the 2006 Montana AFL-CIO convention, one needs to have a little background information.

The salaries and benefits of Montana union officers and staff members are derived, overwhelmingly, from union dues and fees that Montana workers are

forced to fork over as a job condition

And over the next few months, when many Montana union bosses will be giving Mr. Tester their "labor" and "support," they will continue to collect their forced dues-funded salaries.

The total value of this and other unreported, "in-kind," forced dues-funded Big Labor support for Mr. Tester's campaign alone will come to millions of dollars — far more than what his campaign will receive in reported union PAC contributions.

But the Montana workers whose forced dues are paying for Big Labor phone banks, propaganda mailings, and the salaries and benefits of so-called campaign "volunteers" have no say in how their money's spent — even though countless thousands back Mr. Tester's opponent, pro-Right to Work Sen.

Conrad Burns (R).

With Mr. Tester now leading or roughly tied in most polls, union bosses believe they have an excellent chance of grabbing the Montana Senate seat.

Forced-Dues Political Machine Could Mow Down Three Pro-Right to Work Senators

Union strategists are also preparing major forced dues-funded campaigns to knock out two other pro-Right to Work U.S. senators, Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.) and George Allen (R-Va.), this fall.

As this month's Right to Work Newsletter goes to press, polls show Mr. Kyl and Mr. Allen holding relatively small leads over union boss-backed

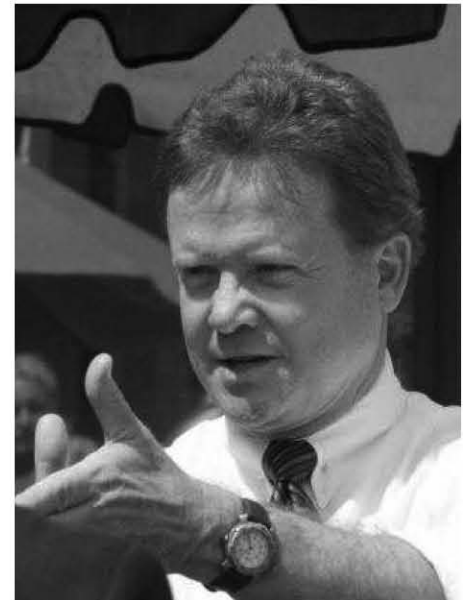
See **Big Labor's Goal** next page



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KEVIN DUFF

Three forced union dues-funded challengers — Jim Pederson (D-Ariz.,

left), Jon Tester (D-Mont., center), and Jim Webb (D-Va.) — now appear

dangerously close to ousting pro-Right to Work U.S. senators this fall.

Big Labor's Goal: Speaker Pelosi

Continued from page 1

Democratic challengers Jim Pederson (Ariz.) and Jim Webb (Va.).

"There's a real danger that the union bosses could capture enough Senate seats this year to change the partisan control of the chamber and install their forced-unionism water carriers in leadership positions," said Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Big Labor is also targeting potentially vulnerable pro-Right to Work House members, with the open intent of switching over enough seats to make forced-unionism zealot Nancy Pelosi [D-Calif.] speaker in 2007.

"Altogether, AFL-CIO and other union bosses will spend more than a billion dollars, mostly forced-dues money, on their Senate and House power grabs.

"Fortunately, however, pro-Right to Work Americans are fighting back. And Committee members are leading the way."

Right to Work PAC Has Already Made the Difference In 2006 Primary Contests

As part of its counterattack, the Committee operates the National Right to Work Political Action Committee (PAC), which is affiliated with, but legally separate from, the National Right to Work Committee itself.

This PAC contributes exclusively to pro-Right to Work candidates.

"To defeat Big Labor's scheme to seize total control over Congress this year, the Right to Work PAC has already contributed \$10,000, the maximum amount permissible under federal law, to

Sen. George Allen," noted Mr. Mix.

"Late last year, Mr. Allen urged Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist [R-Tenn.] to hold a roll-call vote on national Right to Work legislation.

"But it's also vital for the PAC to contribute to Conrad Burns and Jon Kyl, the other pro-Right to Work senators in the union bosses' gun sights.

"In the House, the PAC has already contributed the maximum to Rep. Marilyn Musgrave [R-Colo.], a leader on the Right to Work issue.

"But the PAC now needs funds to help protect Right to Work stalwarts like Reps. Robin Hayes [R-N.C.] and Ron Paul [R-Texas], who also face stiff challenges from AFL-CIO-approved candidates.

Mr. Mix noted the Right to Work PAC has already compiled a solid track record in 2004 and in primary races this year.

"This spring, for example," he said, "two U.S. House candidates who had already proven themselves to be effective leaders for the Right to Work cause won in crowded primary races after receiving support from the Right to Work PAC.

"Neither one of these winning candidates, Adrian Smith [R-Neb.] or Bill Sali [R-Idaho], was considered the frontrunner on Election Day.

"Clearly, primary voters this year are rewarding politicians who outspokenly oppose forced unionism. And the Right to Work PAC plays a vital role by helping candidates keep this issue in mind."

"Among the thousands of federal PAC's, the National Right to Work PAC is unique in contributing only to candidates



Right to Work President Mark Mix: "Big Labor is undeniably on the march this year."

who are publicly and wholeheartedly opposed to compulsory unionism.


"I am confident that, with Committee members' generous support, the PAC will give a big boost this year to the Committee's ongoing efforts to build pro-Right to Work majorities in both chambers of Congress."

Political Action Group, Committee Survey Are Two Means of Backing Cause

Of course, the Committee itself plays a very important role in federal elections through its candidate survey programs, which mobilize pro-Right to Work citizens to convince candidates to pledge to oppose forced unionism and also inform Committee members about how their candidates answer.

"Both the PAC program and a successful Committee Survey 2006 are indispensable if freedom-loving citizens are to forge Senate and House majorities in favor of national Right to Work legislation in the near future," said Mr. Mix.

This month, Mr. Mix is reaching out to many Committee members with a phone message requesting their support for the National Right to Work PAC. He urges all members who are contacted to listen to the message carefully and furnish as much support as they can.

"Big Labor is undeniably on the march this year," he observed. "Thank goodness I know I can count on Committee members everywhere to support this crucial arm of the Right to Work movement." 

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Right to Work Protected in State Legislatures

State-Level Political Action Group Assists Pro-Freedom Candidates

Last fall, Big Labor seemed to be on the verge of securing its #1 legislative objective in Virginia, teacher union bosses' "back door" monopoly-bargaining bill.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Tim Kaine, who had already publicly endorsed this scheme, was running well ahead in the polls.

"Back door" monopoly bargaining would authorize quasi-negotiations between school boards and National Education Association (NEA) union bosses who purport to speak for all teachers.

Teachers who chose not to join the union and didn't share its objectives wouldn't be allowed to be present while their fate was discussed.

Recognizing the seriousness of the threat, the National Right to Work Committee and its Virginia members fought back.

Over the course of 2005, the Committee's candidate survey and citizen mobilization program convinced many Virginia House of Delegates candidates to pledge their opposition to all forms of union monopoly bargaining.

Meanwhile, the State Employee Rights Campaign Committee (SERCC), Right to Work's state political arm, also entered the fray.

SERCC financially backs the campaigns of select nonfederal candidates who vow to defend the Right to Work once in office.

Winning pro-Right to Work candidates such as Virginia Delegates Jeff Frederick (R-Prince William County) and Scott Lingamfelter (R-Woodbridge) received support from SERCC in 2005.

Mr. Kaine went on to win a 52% to 46% victory in November 2005. But thanks to Right to Work victories in several key 2005 House of Delegates races, which were facilitated by the Committee survey program and SERCC, Virginia schools have continued to escape rule by the NEA union hierarchy.

As Fall Elections Approach, State Political Action Arm Plans to Step Up Giving

This year, the Right to Work principle is once again at stake in many state legislative races across the country.

Union bosses in Nebraska and Nevada, for example, are determined to lock up just



In more than half-a-dozen states, freedom-loving citizens are hoping to cast off the oppressive forced-unionism

system by enacting Right to Work legislation in the near future. SERCC is helping them.

a few additional legislative seats so that they will have sufficient votes to pass bills that would severely weaken those states' Right to Work laws.

And in more than half-a-dozen forced-unionism states, freedom-loving citizens are hoping to pave the way for enactment of state Right to Work legislation in the near future.

Along with the candidate survey programs conducted by the Committee and allied regional and state organizations, SERCC can help Right to Work advocates build legislative bulwarks this year.

As this year's November elections approach, SERCC plans to step up its contributions to worthy candidates in close races.

But that will only be possible with Committee members' help, noted Right to Work Committee Vice President Doug Stafford.


"Many Right to Work members also contribute to SERCC," he pointed out.

"And this month, most Right to Work Newsletter readers who receive their copies through the mail will find enclosed with them a letter urging them to contribute to SERCC."

'Too Much Is at Stake This Year For SERCC to Sit on the Sidelines'

"Too much is at stake this year for SERCC to sit on the sidelines due to lack of funds," explained Mr. Stafford.

"But I know I can count on employee-freedom advocates to come through so we can defend all existing state Right to Work laws and build on recent gains in states like Montana, Missouri and Kentucky.

"After all, every new state Right to Work law that citizens adopt with the help of the Committee and SERCC brings Committee members closer to our goal of enacting a nationwide ban on compulsory union dues." 

'The Cringe Is Not a Winning Posture'

Republican Leaders' Timidity Harms Pro-Right to Work Candidates

In the 1994 mid-term elections, GOP candidates gained a walloping 52 U.S. House seats and eight U.S. Senate seats.

Today political analysts from both major parties agree that the Republicans were able to make such sweeping gains 12 years ago only because they confronted then-President Bill Clinton time and time again on matters of principle.

Every single Republican in Congress voted against the Clinton tax hike of 1993.

Strategy of Confrontation Helped Right to Work Cause

And 90% of Republicans voted against the pro-forced unionism "Striker Replacement" Bill backed by Mr. Clinton and Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Although the tax hike was enacted and the strike bill easily passed the House, the GOP confrontations with Mr. Clinton on cutting issues like Right to Work hurt pro-forced unionism politicians.

As Mr. Clinton himself has conceded, votes like these actually had devastating electoral consequences for Big Labor Democrats.

After the 1993-94 confrontations over issues such as the Kennedy strike bill ushered in a GOP-controlled Congress, pro-Right to Work Americans were eager to continue the battle against compulsory

unionism.

In the Senate, then GOP Majority Leader Trent Lott (Miss.) held the first-ever vote on national Right to Work legislation in July 1996.

As expected, Big Labor defeated the bill with every Democratic member voting against it.

But in that November's elections and their immediate aftermath, Right to Work supporters picked up a net of five Senate seats. This included one incumbent who had voted "no," but switched his position in early 1997.

This occurred even as the Clinton-Gore team was reelected in an Electoral College landslide.

Right to Work Bill Would Repeal Federally-Imposed Forced Union Dues

Unfortunately, GOP House leaders never allowed a parallel vote on the National Right to Work Act. This bill (whose House version is H.R.500 in the current Congress) would repeal all federal labor-law provisions that authorize the firing of employees for refusal to pay dues or fees to an unwanted union.

And soon congressional GOP leaders virtually jettisoned the strategy of confrontation on other cutting-edge issues.

As a consequence, senior National Right to Work Committee officers believe GOP House and Senate leaders will be lucky not to see their respective 231-202 and 55-45 majorities trimmed substantially, or even obliterated, in this fall's elections.

"Roll-call votes this year on H.R.500 and its Senate companion, S.370, would expose the anti-Right to Work bias of union-boss incumbents, including several who are in potentially very close races," said Committee President Mark Mix.

"But unless GOP leaders change course soon and hold such votes, I expect the vast majority of endangered Big Labor incumbents to keep their seats, in part because they won't have to vote on H.R.500 or S.370."

No Vote Means Voters Pay Less Attention to Right to Work Issue

A 2004 scientific survey taken by the Research 2000 firm found that 79% of regular voters agree that no worker should be forced to affiliate with a union to get or keep a job. (Research 2000 polls are frequently cited in world-renowned news sources like CNN, the Washington Post, and the Wall Street Journal.)

Unfortunately, without a vote on H.R.500 or S.370, many citizens' attention will not be focused on Right to Work.

"Clearly, public support for the Right to Work principle is overwhelming. And 145 GOP congressmen and senators, a majority of all Republican members of Congress, are already sponsors of either H.R.500 or S.370," noted Mr. Mix.

"Yet House Speaker Dennis Hastert [R-Ill.] and Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist [R-Tenn.] nevertheless appear to be too timid to bring up these national Right to Work measures for votes before Election Day.

"I urge all Right to Work members to contact Mr. Hastert at 202-225-2975 and Mr. Frist at 202-224-3344 to ask them to stop being so timid.

"The cringe is not a winning posture. Or, as Reed Larson [Right to Work's leader from 1959 until 2003, now executive chairman] likes to put it, 'It's the cringing dog that always gets kicked.'" 🐕



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Although public opinion overwhelmingly favors the Right to Work principle, GOP congressional leaders are

avoiding a confrontation on this issue. This "cringing dog" strategy puts their party's majorities at risk.

Union Bosses Fail to Cut School's Salary Offer

Right to Work Allies Eager to Build on Small North Dakota Victory

Thirty-four states now have laws on the books authorizing union officials to strip teachers and other public school employees of their freedom to decide how they will negotiate with a school board over pay, benefits, and working conditions.

Under these statewide teacher monopoly-bargaining laws, educators, including many who have chosen not to be union members, are forced to accept union officials as their "exclusive" negotiators in employment contract talks.

The bosses of the powerful National Education Association (NEA), far and away the biggest union in America, and other teacher unions sometimes claim that their legal privilege to negotiate working conditions for school employees who don't wish to join a union or pay dues is a "burden."

But government-imposed union monopoly actually lays a heavy burden on school employees with unusual talents.

Snubbing gifted, hardworking teachers, the NEA union hierarchy categorically opposes "any...system of compensation based on an evaluation of an education employee's performance." Official NEA policy also reflexively "opposes providing additional compensation" for hard-to-fill positions.

NEA locals across the country zealously follow these collectivist policies.

The latest publicized example is the NEA affiliate in Kenmare, N.D., a small town located 55 miles northwest of Minot and just a few miles south of the Canadian border.

Last summer, Kenmare Public Schools, after failing to fill a speech and language pathologist position at the salary set in the teacher union contract, decided to offer an additional \$15,000 in "incentive pay."

'KEA's Argument Is Premised' On an 'Erroneous Assumption'

The offer would almost certainly have enabled the school board to hire a qualified applicant. But it infuriated top bosses of the Kenmare Education Association (KEA/NEA) teacher union, who insist any incentive-pay deal would illegally infringe their monopoly-bargaining privileges.

In late 2005, union lawyers turned to the state Supreme Court as part of an



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After defeating teacher union lawyers in court, Kenmare school authorities may offer applicants for a speech-language

pathologist position \$15,000 a year more than the amount dictated by the union contract.

ongoing crusade to block incentive pay.

"For one individual to be allowed to negotiate up to \$15,000 additional salary is wrong," snarled then-KEA President Donna Schmit to the *Kenmare News*.

But last month, the state Supreme Court unanimously rejected KEA lawyers' claims and ruled that the school district could, after reaching an impasse in its bargaining with union officials, offer more money to find a taker for a hard-to-fill position.

Justice Carol Ronning Kapsner's opinion tartly noted: "KEA's argument is premised on the erroneous assumption that contracts formed without KEA's consent are bad faith per se."

Although North Dakota's teacher union bosses have long asserted and exercised monopoly-bargaining power over teachers, Ms. Kapsner expressed doubt that state law actually grants Big Labor this privilege.

In 2001, when North Dakota Education Association (NDEA/NEA) union lobbyists tried to get language saying the individual teacher isn't allowed to enter into independent negotiations with a board inserted into the state education bargaining law, legislators, well aware of Right to Work opposition, refused to do so.

"In itself, the *KEA v. Kenmare School District #28* ruling merely carves out a small exception to union monopoly-bargaining power," said National Right to Work Committee Vice President

Matthew Leen. "It leaves the vast majority of North Dakota public school employees under Big Labor control."


Right to Work Leader Sees Major Opportunity

"However, by recognizing and acting on the key points made by Justice Kapsner, Right to Work advocates may be able to bust up the teacher union monopoly in Roughrider Country," Mr. Leen continued.

This month, the National Institute for Labor Relations Research, the "think tank" of the Right to Work cause, is asking the boards of all unionized school districts in North Dakota to provide copies of their teacher union contracts.

The Institute will next ask all school boards whose contracts recognize a teacher union as teachers' "exclusive" bargaining agent not to renew this designation when the current contract expires.

"That's just common sense," explained Mr. Leen. "North Dakota schoolchildren, taxpayers, and dedicated professional educators would all benefit if school hiring and pay decisions could be made through individual negotiations, rather than all dictated in advance by a teacher union contract."

"And in the wake of *KEA v. Kenmare School District #28*, North Dakota school boards evidently have the power to make this much-needed reform happen." 

Illegal Strike Demands Cost Workers \$50 Million

UAW Bosses Are Guilty, But GM Employees Will Get No Restitution

On June 27, a federal jury in Detroit found two United Autoworkers (UAW) union bosses guilty of prolonging a strike against General Motors (GM) truck plants in Pontiac, Mich., in order to pressure management to give jobs to relatives and cronies.

But the roughly 5900 GM employees who lost an estimated \$50 million in wages while being kept out on strike to secure UAW bosses' illegal strike demands will get no restitution whatsoever.

"Two UAW union bosses have been caught wielding their federal monopoly-bargaining privileges to get cushy jobs for UAW insiders, at the expense of both rank-and-file workers and GM shareholders," said National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix.

"But justice hasn't been done.

"Neither the perpetrators themselves nor current UAW officers will have to fork over a penny to workers, who lost up to \$20,000 apiece, or shareholders.

"A class-action suit against the UAW and GM that more than 140 Pontiac workers joined was tossed out on a technicality in 2003.

"And GM workers employed at the Pontiac plants in Michigan and at other plants in non-Right to Work states will continue to have to fork over dues or fees to the UAW brass just to keep their jobs — despite the clear evidence that UAW officials have undermined, rather than protected, workers' interests."

Clean Unionism and Compulsory Unionism Are Fundamentally at Odds

The two convicted UAW officials are Danny Douglas, former president of Local 594 in Pontiac and, at the time of the verdict, a UAW international service representative, and Jay Campbell, a former shop committee chairman, now retired.

All legitimate issues in Local 594 bosses' 1997 strike against GM's Pontiac plants were reportedly resolved within 30 days.

But Mr. Douglas, Mr. Campbell, and a third UAW boss who died before he could be put on trial demanded that Mr. Campbell's son, Gordon, and Todd Fante, the son of another UAW boss, be hired for skilled trades jobs for which they were not qualified.

Other evidently unqualified UAW-boss relatives for whom the UAW bargaining team demanded jobs included Jason Beardsley, the son of then UAW President Stephen Yokich's administrative assistant, and David Shoemaker, son of then-international Vice President Richard Shoemaker.

Only when GM caved in by quietly agreeing to hire the UAW scions and provide roughly \$200,000 in phony overtime payments, to be divvied up by the UAW bargaining team, did the strike conclude.

"Though only Mr. Douglas and Mr. Campbell were put on trial for criminal acts, the late Mr. Yokich and Mr. Shoemaker, who just retired this year, also obviously profited from the scheme. It's difficult to believe they didn't know about it," noted Mr. Mix.

"In the late nineties, if not today, corruption in UAW officialdom evidently went all the way to the top.

And federal labor policy, Mr. Mix continued, is in most cases the "silent partner" in Big Labor lawbreaking.

"Half-a-century ago, labor-law scholar Sylvester Petro, himself a former union organizer, foresaw that union corruption would be a growing problem as long as federal law and state laws

promote forced unionism.

"It is as absurd to expect good clean unionism in conditions of extensive compulsory unionism, as it would be to expect good government in a society where the divine right of kings or dictatorship of the proletariat was the central political principle," wrote Mr. Petro.

"Over the years, history has again and again vindicated his assessment. It's time for Congress to take heed."

'Power of the Purse String' Is Workers' Power To Control Union Bosses

"U.S. senators and congressmen need to return to workers the 'power of the purse string' so that they can protest union corruption by withholding their dues, without getting fired," Mr. Mix added.

"The 'power of the purse string' is the single most effective way workers can control union bosses."

Mr. Mix urged Committee members everywhere to contact Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn., 202-224-3344) and House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-Ill., 202-225-2975) to urge them to hold roll-call votes on S.370 and H.R.500, the national Right to Work measures now pending in Congress. 📌



As labor-law scholar Sylvester Petro, himself once a union organizer, wrote half-a-century ago, "It is...absurd to

expect good clean unionism in conditions of extensive compulsory unionism...."

Big Labor Bullies Volunteer Firefighters

Small Department's Bid to Get a New Fire Station in Jeopardy

When National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix took a brief vacation to visit his mother in a small western New York town not long ago, he found he couldn't get away from the problems instigated by forced dues-hungry Big Labor bosses.

Picking up a local newspaper on Sunday, June 16, Mr. Mix learned that in the nearby Village of Bath the construction of a new, long-planned station for volunteer firefighters may be derailed by the bosses of Local 139 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW/AFL-CIO) union.

The Bath Volunteer Fire Department (BVFD), a private nonprofit entity, has planned to finance the station first by securing a \$2.4 million federal loan, and then by using the annual fees it collects from the Village of Bath for protective services to repay the loan.

The BVFD also has expected to receive charitable donations to help cover its construction costs once the work begins. And a large share of these donations would undoubtedly come in the form of free labor by local construction firms and their employees.

Fire Chief to IBEW Brass: 'You Have Done Great Damage'

But early this year, top bosses of IBEW Local 139 filed a lengthy complaint with the New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) regarding the Bath project. The 18-page grievance, with the names of 17 lawyers attached, claimed the new station was a public project covered under New York's "prevailing wage" law.

In early June, NYSDOL bureaucrats sided with the Local 139 brass.

If the NYSDOL ruling that the fire station is a public, "prevailing wage" project stands, then under state law the construction project will not be permitted to accept volunteer help from employees of contractors.

Skilled workers, including those who would gladly donate their labor, would have to be paid the "prevailing" (i.e., union) wage. It's estimated that the IBEW boss-instigated ruling could add \$300,000 to \$400,000 to the cost of the project.

That's money that neither the volunteer firefighters nor the Village of Bath has.



ROB PRICE

Recently, New York electrician union bosses persuaded state bureaucrats to throw a monkey wrench into a

fire-station construction project in Bath, NY. Local firefighters were understandably upset.

Deeply upset by the ruling, BVFD Chief Mark Conrad wrote open letters to the bosses of Local 139 and the NYSDOL, charging: "You have done great damage to the dream of the 107 [department] members and their families...."

"You have also managed to show all the people of the village who donated money and time to this project that we have a nice vacant lot to show for three years time and effort."

Mark Mix: Federal Labor Law Fosters Union-Boss Abuses

As this month's Right to Work Newsletter goes to press, Mr. Conrad is still holding out hope that, by reworking the contractual language of the project, he can avoid having it classified as "prevailing wage."

"We're just waiting on the attorney for contracts," Mr. Conrad told the Steuben County (N.Y.) *Courier* in early July. "From there, I guess we're going forward."

Mr. Mix echoed Mr. Conrad's hope, but also noted that, regardless of the ultimate outcome of this particular case, it illustrates how federal labor policies


that promote forced unionism foster additional abuses.

"Except in states with Right to Work laws, federal labor law authorizes the firing of virtually any non-managerial, private-sector employee for refusal to pay dues or fees to an unwanted union," noted Mr. Mix.

"Misguided federal policy thus rewards union officials who make the quest for more forced-dues money, rather than serving workers' best interests, the focus of their professional activities.

"It's no wonder, then, that union bosses in New York and many other non-Right to Work states eagerly exploit 'prevailing wage' statutes and other government regulations in order effectively to deny work to nonunion employees and firms.

"The Bath volunteer firefighters and the communities they serve are only some of the most recent victims of federally-promoted forced unionism."

To help end such abuses, Mr. Mix called on Congress to pass H.R.500 and S.370, pending national Right to Work legislation that would outlaw all private-sector forced union dues and fees throughout the United States. 

Boston's 'Big Dig': A PLA Disaster

Problems With Costly Union-Only Tunnel Project Keep Getting Worse

On July 10, at least 12 tons of concrete fell from the ceiling of one of Boston's "Big Dig" tunnels, killing newlywed Milena Del Valle, of the city's Jamaica Plains neighborhood, and injuring her husband.

Even before this tragic event, the union-only "Big Dig," officially called the Central/Artery Tunnel Project, was widely recognized as a poorly constructed, extraordinarily expensive boondoggle.

The "Big Dig" tunnel, system was conceived in the 1970's to replace Boston's aging elevated six-lane Central Artery and improve access to Logan Airport and Boston Harbor. In 1987, Congress voted to furnish federal taxpayer funds, and ground was first broken in 1991.

To the dismay of independent construction employees and firms and Right to Work advocates, Massachusetts politicians announced that the "Big Dig" would be subject to a union-only "project labor agreement" (PLA).

Construction firm owners who wished to bid on the project, whether unionized or union-free, would be forced to impose restrictive union work rules on employees and to fill positions through discriminatory union hiring halls.

In 1991, project managers estimated the "Big Dig" would cost \$2.6 billion and take seven years to complete.

In 2001, President George W. Bush issued an executive order generally barring union-only PLA's in federal taxpayer-funded projects, but the order did not revoke PLA's such as the "Big Dig" that were already in effect.

Many of Project's Problems 'Linked to Faulty Construction'

Thirteen years and nearly \$15 billion after ground was broken, the tunnel system was open, but still not complete.

Then, in November 2004, Boston media outlets reported that the "Big Dig" had experienced 1400 leaks in its tunnel wall as well as a wide array of other costly-to-repair damage.

In addition to suffering from inadequate planning, the project has been plagued by "problems linked to faulty



BOSTON GLOBE

Boston's \$15 billion, union-only "Big Dig" has been a disaster. Last month, huge concrete panels were removed

from one tunnel after a section of its ceiling collapsed, killing one woman and injuring her husband.

construction," as an AP news report noted last month.

For example, many of the leaks were apparently a result of subcontractors' failing to remove gravel and other debris before pouring concrete.

It also appears that tunnel ceiling bolts were attached with epoxy before it was properly cured and/or into improperly cleaned holes. The epoxy's manufacturer has suspected it was not mixed properly.

At press time, it is still not known whether the evidently low-quality work was responsible for the ceiling collapse in the "Big Dig's" I-90 connector tunnel and Mrs. Del Valle's death.

Time For Congress to Codify Ban on Federal-Taxpayer-Funded PLA's

National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix recalled that, just five years ago, a group of Massachusetts politicians, union-label Democrats and union boss-appeasing Republicans, praised the "Big Dig" PLA for supposedly promoting "labor harmony" and urged the Bush Administration to leave it in place.

"Now, no one can deny that the charges Right to Work advocates have long made against union-only PLA's are true in spades with regard to the 'Big Dig,'" said Mr. Mix.

"It suffered innumerable delays, many clearly occurring because shoddy work had to be done over again. It went way

over budget. And the final product is defective and dangerous.

"And, of course, the 'Big Dig' and other union-only PLA's are fundamentally wrong because they use taxpayer dollars to discriminate against nonunion construction employees and firms.

"While the 'Big Dig' is an especially egregious case of PLA abuses, excessive costs for taxpayers are the norm.

"For example, a study of New York State school-construction PLA's published this spring by the Beacon Hill Institute at Suffolk University in Boston found that on average they raise the base construction bids by 20%.

"The National Right to Work Committee and its members are committed to ending the abuse of federal, state and local taxpayer funds to bankroll PLA's.

"As a first step, the Committee is now calling for roll-call floor votes on at least one of two pending bills, H.R.1248 and H.R.1449, that would codify President Bush's 2001 executive order tightly restricting PLA's in federally-funded works."

In a recent letter to Capitol Hill supporting these measures, Mr. Mix expressed hope that Congress will learn from the "Big Dig" disaster, which it helped bankroll, and take action now to see that such a mistake never happens again.

"PLA's are deeply detrimental to the public interest," wrote Mr. Mix. "Congress should set a good example for the states by permanently banning federally-funded PLA's." 