

'Unite Here' Union Lawbreakers Chastised

Ordered to Pay Damages For Defamation, Violating Workers' Privacy

Over the past three decades, union organizing drives have more and more frequently adopted the top-down, or "cram-down unionism," approach.

In such campaigns, union bosses browbeat companies into helping organize employees through accusations of regulatory violations, negative PR campaigns, and other types of pressure.

The union bosses' goal is not only to impose a so-called "neutrality" deal on the company, but also to convey the message to independent-minded employees that all resistance to unionization will be futile.

Union organizer Joe Crump once succinctly explained the cram-down strategy in an influential labor-journal article:

"Employees are complex and unpredictable. Employers are simple and predictable." Hence the strategy of lies and intimidation to impose top-down deals on companies.

California Jury: Union Organizers Made False Charges In Order to Scare Patients

As they risk losing customers who may be misled by Big Labor propaganda and having their reputations dragged through the mud, employers are under extreme pressure to acquiesce to "neutrality" deals.

However, in those cases where employers do fight back against forced unionism, Big Labor bullies' ugly tactics

often backfire. California's non-profit network of doctors and hospitals Sutter Health is a case in point.

Last spring, the hierarchy of the 450,000-member union conglomerate Unite Here viciously attacked Sutter for contracting out its laundry services to the St. Louis-based Angelica Textile Services Inc.

Union bosses had been trying to intimidate Sutter into announcing it would end its relationship with Angelica unless the latter, already a partially unionized firm, consented to a nationwide "neutrality" deal.

When Sutter balked, the Unite Here brass sent out a mass direct-mail hit piece to 11,000 women of childbearing age in northern California, which falsely and recklessly claimed that Sutter hospitals did not ensure their bed linens are free of "blood, feces, and harmful pathogens."

But Sutter refused to be intimidated. Instead, the firm sued for libel.

And in late July, a jury in Placer County, Calif., found that Unite Here organizers had acted with "fraud, malice, or oppression" and ordered union officials to fork over nearly \$17.3 million for harming Sutter Health's business and reputation.

Ruling Exposes Ugly Tactics Of Top-Down Organizing

Just a few weeks after the Sutter Health verdict, the Unite Here hierarchy was again found guilty of unlawful activities connected to a cram-down unionism campaign.

On September 1, the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia ruled in favor of six employees of the Cincinnati-based Cintas Corp. and three of their relatives and friends who had sued Unite Here bosses for illegally violating their privacy.

A few years ago, the employees became alarmed after they or their family and friends began receiving unexpected, uninvited visits from union organizers who had illegally obtained their addresses by using license plate numbers to access DMV records.

At the time, the Unite Here hierarchy had recently announced it would pressure Cintas managers to agree to recognize it as employees' "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent on the sole evidence of signed union "authorization" cards that union organizers could collect at employees' homes.

The court ordered Unite Here bosses to pay \$2500 to each of the Cintas employees who had brought the lawsuit. The court will later decide whether it will award punitive damages and compensation to approximately 2000 other Cintas employees whose personal information was also illegally accessed.

Ultimately, union kingpins may be ordered to fork over millions of dollars in compensation and damages.


Congress Can and Must Act to Curtail 'Top-Down' Organizing Abuses

Union lawyers are expected to appeal both the California and the Pennsylvania cases.

But they already illustrate the need for Congress to crack down on cram-down unionism abuses, said Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Gross abuses are common in top-down organizing drives," he observed. "But only rarely are union officials held responsible.

"Even in the Sutter Health and Cintas cases, assuming their appeals fail, union bosses will pay the damages mostly with forced-dues money conscripted from workers — not out of their own pockets.

"To rein in abuses, Congress must remove Big Labor's incentive for 'top-down' organizing. And a good first step would be enactment of H.R.874 or S.1173, pending bills that would prohibit union officials from seizing monopoly power solely through the acquisition of union 'authorization' cards." 



A California jury and a federal court in Philadelphia both recently rendered judgments against Unite Here union

operatives for employing illegal tactics to seize monopoly-bargaining power over workers.