

'Agency' Shop Is Repeal of Right to Work

Big Labor Politicians Who Claim Otherwise Are 'Fooling Nobody'

Ever since union bosses engineered the election of Democratic majorities in both chambers of the Iowa General Assembly last fall, and thus paved the way for Big Labor politicians to run the Iowa capitol this year, two things have become increasingly obvious to state political observers:

1) Newly-minted House Speaker Pat Murphy (D-Dubuque) and Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal (D-Council Bluffs) are eager to repay their Big Labor allies by bringing up legislation empowering union officials to force Iowa workers to pay union dues and fees as a condition of employment.

2) Mr. Murphy and Mr. Gronstal are desperate to prevent their so-called "agency-shop" scheme from being exposed for what it is: repeal of the Hawkeye State's six-decade-old Right to Work law.

In their pre-Christmas PR meetings with the Iowa media, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Gronstal claimed that because their scheme would "only" force workers to pay fees to an unwanted union, or be fired, and not technically force workers to join, it wouldn't constitute Right to Work repeal.

Unfortunately for Mr. Murphy and Mr. Gronstal, this claim is simply false.

A new fact sheet published by the National Institute for Labor Relations Research -- available at www.nilrr.org -- explains why.

Forced Formal Membership Already Banned, Even in Non-Right to Work States

As the Institute points out, there is actually no difference between the forced agency shop and the unabashed forced-unionism shop:

"According to the U.S. Supreme Court, the 'agency' shop is the only form of compulsory unionism authorized by our principal federal labor law, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA).

"The Court has held that, even in non-Right to Work states, employees cannot be required to become formal members of labor unions and submit to union discipline.

"States have the authority to prohibit all types of forced union dues and fees." In states without Right to Work laws, union monopoly-bargaining contracts, under which employees are denied the freedom to represent themselves, typically have language forcing nonmembers to pay union



Early this year, Iowa's new union-label legislative leaders are vowing to bring up legislation that would gut the state's

Right to Work law by forcing union nonmembers to fork over so-called "agency" fees, or be fired.

dues, often euphemistically called agency fees.

National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix commented:

"The special coercive power Organized Labor wields in non-Right to Work states is the power to collect forced union fees from nonmembers. And that's the precise coercive power Iowa union bosses will get if the agency-fee scheme is enacted.

"Fortunately, Big Labor politicians' attempt to camouflage Right to Work repeal is fooling nobody. Thanks largely to National Committee members and supporters in Iowa who are sounding the alarm, Iowa citizens know what's afoot. And they overwhelmingly oppose it."

Iowans Passionately Support Their Right to Work Law

Mr. Mix added that Iowans have proven time and again that they passionately support their Right to Work law.

For example, in 1991 union lobbyists browbeat legislative majorities into passing a scheme granting teacher union

bosses expanded monopoly-bargaining privileges over teachers. Only then-GOP Gov. Terry Branstad's veto stopped the bill from becoming law. In the next elections, pro-Right to Work citizens defeated so many politicians who had sided with the union bosses that Big Labor Democrats lost partisan control of the Iowa House!

Mr. Mix vowed to mobilize each and every National Right to Work member and supporter in Iowa to ensure that Iowa politicians do not ignore the will of the vast majority of citizens this time by approving any kind of agency-shop measure.

And the Committee lobbying campaign will be closely coordinated with that of the grass-roots Iowans for Right to Work Committee, based in Des Moines.

"If at all possible, our objective is to make public opposition to tampering with Iowa's Right to Work law so manifest that the Murphy-Gronstal plan for a forced agency fee is scrapped," Mr. Mix declared.

"But if this destructive legislation nevertheless does come up, I am confident that Right to Work allies can defeat it in the General Assembly."