

Big Labor/UN Alliance Dealt Setback

Right to Work Mobilization Trumps ILO Ruling in North Carolina

North Carolina is one of just two states that statutorily bars government union officials from seeking, obtaining, and wielding the power to act as the "exclusive" bargaining agent over all public employees, including union members and nonmembers alike, in a government-delineated "bargaining unit."

For decades, government union bosses have chafed at the fact that pro-Right to Work citizens in North Carolina (along with those in Virginia) have thwarted all efforts by union lobbyists to enact legislation instituting "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining.

And in December 2005, Big Labor made it clear just how far it would go to get public-sector monopoly-bargaining power in the Tarheel State when top international bosses of the United Electrical Union (UE) filed a complaint against North Carolina and the U.S. with the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Union lawyers novelly argued that both North Carolina's refusal to corral public employees into unions, and the U.S. Congress's refusal to force North Carolina to do so, constituted "violations of international law."

When ILO bureaucrats finally ruled on the UE filing this April, they not surprisingly, given the ILO's strongly collectivist bent, upheld the complaint and called specifically for repeal of North Carolina GS 95-98, which prohibits public-sector monopoly bargaining.

'This Ruling . . . Adds Tremendous Weight to the Push For' Union Monopoly

Union officials across North Carolina applauded the ILO ruling. They insisted that, even though the United Nations agency has no direct power to enforce it, the ruling would pave the way for legislative victory at the North Carolina state capitol in Raleigh.

"This ruling by an important body of the United Nations adds tremendous weight to the push" for public-sector monopoly bargaining in North Carolina, said Angaza Laughinghouse, president of UE Local 150.

Just two weeks after the ILO ruling, Big Labor state Rep. Dan Blue (D-Wake) introduced two bills, H.1583 and H.1584, which would respectively have repealed

GS 95-98 and explicitly authorized union monopoly bargaining over certain public employees.

However, the National Right to Work Committee and its 51,000 North Carolina members and supporters quickly fought back.

First, the Committee mailed letters to all House members urging them to oppose H.1583 and H.1584 on all votes.

Next, Committee staff held face-to-face meetings with key members of Mr. Blue's Judiciary II Committee and deployed Right to Work's telecommunications facilities to mobilize freedom-loving constituents of targeted legislators.

Several legislators who normally vote with Big Labor evidently cooled to Mr. Blue's measures after they heard from Right to Work supporters.

In the end, realizing he did not have enough votes on his committee to ensure either bill's passage, Mr. Blue let H.1583 and H.1584 die without a roll call in late May.

Legislators Chose to Heed Their Constituents, Not International Bureaucrats

"Fortunately, a critical number of politicians on the Judiciary II Committee recognized this time that, to stay in office, they must heed their constituents, not international bureaucrats," said Committee President Mark Mix.

"However, this battle is far from over.

"Now pending in the North Carolina House's State Personnel Committee is S.1271, introduced by union-label Sen. John Snow [D-Murphy] and passed by the Senate May 24.

"While this bill would not directly impose monopoly bargaining, it would for the first time force Tarheel State taxpayers to pick up the tab for public employees' union dues to be deducted automatically from their paychecks.

"The Committee is lobbying hard to foil the payroll deduction scheme, which is a significant step toward public-sector monopoly bargaining.

"No one questions North Carolina public employees' right to join a union. And current state law explicitly protects that right. But so-called 'exclusive' bargaining is another story.

"As the board of directors of the National Education Association teacher union's Pennsylvania affiliate admitted a few years ago, it grants union officials 'a *legal monopoly* to represent employees.' [Emphasis added.]

"And handing union bosses monopoly power to bargain the contracts of government employees, whose salaries are paid by taxpayers, undermines our democratic institutions."

Mr. Mix promised that the Committee would do everything possible to prevent union monopoly bargaining and taxpayer-subsidized union payroll deductions from becoming law in North Carolina. 📌



The International Labor Organization, headed by Chilean Juan Somavia, is helping Big Labor's push for monopoly

bargaining in North Carolina. But Right to Work supporters are pushing back.