

Committee Asks For White House Veto Pledge

Bill to Federalize Public-Safety Union Monopoly Looms in Congress

On June 5, Big Labor Congressman Bob Andrews (D-N.J.) started paving the way for a U.S. House floor vote on legislation that would establish a new federal mandate imposing union "exclusive representation" (monopoly bargaining) over state and local police and firefighters and other public-safety employees.

Acting in his capacity as chairman of the Health, Employment, Labor and Pensions Subcommittee of the House Committee on Education and Labor, Mr. Andrews held a stacked hearing on H.R.980, the so-called "Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation" Act.

More than 70% of the hearing witnesses were government union officials and other zealous supporters of H.R.980, which is more accurately labeled as the Police/Fire Monopoly-Bargaining Bill.

Under current law, each state has very broad authority to set its own policy regarding the unionization of state and local government employees in general and public-safety officers in particular.

Public-Safety Officers Would Be Stripped of the Freedom To Bargain as Individuals

Unfortunately, elected officials in a number of states have caved into Big Labor demands by enacting state laws empowering union officials to seize monopoly-bargaining control over public-safety employees.

However, roughly half of the 50 states have so far either refused completely to

grant union bosses monopoly control over public-safety employment, or have acquiesced to a relatively limited form of "exclusive" bargaining.

It has long been a goal of government union officials to wield broad monopoly-bargaining power over public-safety officers in every state across the nation.

H.R.980, introduced in February by Big Labor Congressman Dale Kildee (D-Mich.) and now cosponsored by a majority of House members, would satisfy this union-boss objective.

Hundreds of thousands of policemen, firemen and paramedics who up to now have been free under state law to negotiate on their own behalf would be stripped of that freedom by H.R.980.

Union Dons Initiate 'Legal Actions That Cost the City Valuable Staff Time'

As the hearing testimony of HR specialist Neil Reichenberg, one of two witnesses who were permitted to speak out against H.R.980, made clear, this bill threatens taxpayers' wallets as well as public-safety officers' freedom.

Mr. Reichenberg described how, in St. Paul, Minn., which has long been under a monopoly-bargaining system, officials of Local 21 of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) union have for years been displaying their contempt for the city's fire chief by promoting workplace strife.

He quoted from a recently published audit of the St. Paul Fire Department:



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Will George Bush go on record against federally-mandated union monopoly bargaining over police and firemen?


"[T]he union [hierarchy] encourages members to file grievances, contacts politicians about minor issues, and initiates legal actions that cost the city valuable time and money."

"Union monopoly bargaining, by its very nature, promotes labor-management strife. And in the public sector, taxpayers often pay a steep price for such strife," commented National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix.

"H.R.980 would greatly worsen the problem by expanding government union bosses' monopoly-bargaining privileges where they already have them and instituting them in communities that have been free of monopoly bargaining up to now.

"Recognizing that this legislation will be very difficult to stop in the House, the Committee is mobilizing its members nationwide for a Senate floor battle against the Police/Fire Monopoly-Bargaining Bill."

As a precautionary measure, Mr. Mix also sent a letter to President Bush recently urging him to pledge now to veto the measure should it reach his desk.

And Mr. Mix is urging Committee members everywhere to call the White House comment line at 202-456-1111 to reinforce the Right to Work message and ensure that the President goes on the record against H.R.980 right away. 

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