

# Is Probing Union Corruption 'Anti-Worker'?

## *Nationwide Press Service For Union Media Obviously Believes So*

Press Associates, Inc. (PAI) is a half-century-old news service that furnishes news stories and photographs for union publications nationwide. PAI exists first and foremost to serve union officials and union staff members, and it consistently echoes their biases.

Therefore, the open contempt for the federal agency that bears sole responsibility for overseeing the financial integrity of unions displayed by the PAI in a news report distributed in late July, and subsequently appearing in many union newspapers across America, is a matter of serious public concern.

PAI Staff Writer Mark Gruenberg's report discussed the July 17 vote by the Big Labor Democrat-controlled U.S. House to cut by roughly 20% the White House's proposed Fiscal Year 2008 Budget for the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Labor Management Standards (OLMS).

The OLMS's current budget of \$47.7 million (0.4% of all Labor Department discretionary spending) enables its staff to audit annually only 4.6% of the unions that are required to file federal disclosure forms.

But for the 237 members of Congress that voted July 17 to kill an amendment that, while appropriating funds well below the White House request, would at least have kept the OLMS at its current level, union bosses apparently shouldn't have to face even a one in 22 chance of getting audited each year.

### **Pat Kennedy: Investigating Union Corruption Tantamount To 'Going After' Workers**

For his part, Mr. Gruenberg characterized the OLMS as flat-out "anti-worker." And editors of union newspapers such as *Labor World* (Duluth, Minn.) and *Building Tradesman* (Detroit, Mich.), reinforced this characterization with headlines for the PAI report branding the OLMS as an "anti-union" agency.

During the House floor debate over OLMS funding, Rhode Island Democrat Pat Kennedy, son of Ted and zealous follower of the family tradition of carrying water for Big Labor, indulged in similar rhetoric.

House members who want to increase



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**Legendary journalist H.L. Mencken (left) once mockingly said: "If you are against labor racketeers, then you are**

or even merely maintain funding for the OLMS are "going after . . . people who are trying to earn a living," blustered Mr. Kennedy.

And all but eight of the 229 House Democrats who voted on the OLMS amendment, plus 16 Big Labor-appealing Republicans, expressed their agreement with Mr. Kennedy by voting to cut the agency's budget.

National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix commented:

"Many years ago, legendary journalist H.L. Mencken coined a 'syllogism' to lampoon the loony logic corrupt union officials use to divert attention from their misdeeds.

"If you are against labor racketeers, then you are against the working man,' mockingly wrote the Baltimore *Sun* columnist.

"Unfortunately, today's Big Labor politicians on Capitol Hill not only see no irony in this 'syllogism,' they actually want to extend it to cover union embezzlement and fraud as well as racketeering!"

### **Since 2001, OLMS Has Recouped More Than \$100 Million For Workers**

"The fact is, just since 2001, OLMS investigations have resulted in nearly 800 convictions of corrupt union officials and helped workers recoup more than \$100 million, largely forced union dues and fees that were confiscated or spent illegally," Mr. Mix continued.



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**against the working man." Sadly, Big Labor Rep. Pat Kennedy (D-R.I.) sees no irony there.**

"Any reasonable person can see that helping workers, union members and nonmembers alike, bring to justice crooked union bosses who have ripped them off is neither 'anti-worker' nor 'anti-union.'

"However, most union bosses, union PR flacks, and union puppet politicians, oppose even modest efforts to combat union corruption.

"The OLMS deserves Congress's support, not contempt, for helping expose criminals like the former Teamster president in Houston who was recently sentenced to 78 months in prison for embezzlement and mail fraud.

"And the Committee is now lobbying to ensure the Senate passes a budget that dedicates at least 0.5% of Labor Department discretionary funding to the OLMS.

"But even if its budget were increased substantially, the OLMS would never be able to ferret out the vast majority of unscrupulous union officials.

"To strike a truly formidable blow against union corruption, Congress should repeal the federal authorization for forced union dues and fees by passing S.1301 or H.R.697, the two national Right to Work measures now pending before Congress.

"These bills would empower workers who detect union corruption to retaliate immediately by cutting off all financial support for the union. Corrupt union bosses may dislike auditors -- but workers who hold the power of the purse string are by far their most vigilant foes." 📌