

# Forced Dues at Issue in Kentucky Strike

## *Company Owners: Union Officials 'Should Not Force People to Join'*

As many National Right to Work Committee members know all too well from personal experience, federal labor law puts unionized employers under intense pressure to acquiesce to Big Labor demands to collect compulsory dues from employees.

Unless the business operates in a state with a Right to Work law, a unionized employer must either rubber-stamp a deal that authorizes the firing of employees, including union nonmembers, for refusal to pay union dues or fees, or at a minimum put a forced-dues deal on the table.

Federal labor law is so biased in favor of forced unionism that any employer who flat out refuses to trade away employees' freedom of choice thereby commits an "unfair labor practice."

Nevertheless, many unionized employers in non-Right to Work states do strongly resist the imposition of forced union dues on their employees.

### **Local Union Czar: 'We Are at War'**

Current examples of employers who oppose forced unionism and were willing to stand up to the union bosses are brothers Jeffrey, Michael, Jay and Craig Mackin -- the owners of Interlock Industries, a diversified manufacturing and transportation firm based in Louisville, Ky.

For more than 10 weeks this summer, the Mackin brothers were hit with a strike at one of their major facilities, the Ohio Valley Aluminum foundry in Shelbyville, Ky., because they refused to cave in to Big Labor's demand that all of the foundry's front-line employees be corralled into a union.

On June 1, bosses of Local 1693 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA/AFL-CIO) union ordered the 84 employees who had been working tending blast furnaces and sawing aluminum ingots off the job.

As the Louisville *Courier-Journal* reported, Local 1693 bosses and union militants made no bones about the fact that they wanted "all employees to join the United Steelworkers and pay dues."

Company attorney Edwin Hopson publicly identified this strike demand as "the one sticking point." The Mackin family "feels strongly" that union officials "should not force people to join," he explained.



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**This summer, steelworkers union bosses orchestrated a 10-week strike against a family-owned foundry in**

**Shelbyville, Ky., when its owners refused to cut a deal granting them forced-dues privileges.**

Weeks into the strike, Local 1693 President Kevin Baird insisted that he and his lieutenants would soon enough secure their demand for a forced-dues contract.

"We are at war," he declared.

### **Right to Work President Commends Mackin Brothers**

In response to repeated instances of stalking by Local 1693 zealots, the company ultimately went to court to obtain a restraining order. Later, the company went to court again to get a union militant cited for contempt after he had followed a nonstriking worker home.

Finally, in mid-August, having failed to get Interlock Industries' acquiescence to a union-only deal, Local 1693 bosses opted for a tactical retreat and ordered union members to go back to work without a contract.

"I commend the Mackin brothers for standing firm in their support for their employees' freedom of choice," said National Right to Work Committee President Mark Mix.

"Unfortunately, all too many employers eventually cave in to the bullying tactics of Organized Labor by consenting to force all employees to join or pay dues to a union, or be fired.

"In all fairness, many employers honestly believe they have no choice but to go along with the union brass if they

want their businesses to survive.

"And while principled employers like the Mackin brothers can help mitigate the freedom-crushing impact of America's current pro-forced unionism labor policy, the genuine solution is to change the policy by eliminating all provisions that authorize the firing of employees for refusal to pay union dues or fees."

Mr. Mix added that legislation already pending in the U.S. Senate and House would do just that.

National Right to Work measures S.1301 and H.R.697, respectively introduced by Sen. Jim DeMint (R-S.C.) and Congressman Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), now have a total of 87 Senate and House sponsors.

### **Forced-Dues Labor Policy Incites Workplace Stife**

"As the recent Shelbyville strike illustrates, the federal labor policy promoting forced union dues incites workplace strife. And that's just one of many reasons why it must be changed," said Mr. Mix.

He urged Committee members everywhere to contact their senators and congressmen today through the Congressional Switchboard, 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121, and ask them to cosponsor the National Right to Work Act if they haven't already done so. 