

'Don't Make Us Defend Compulsory Unionism'

Big Labor Virginia Politicians Wish to Advance Agenda by Stealth

Union-label legislators in Virginia's House of Delegates as well as their apologists in the Old Dominion media spent several days late last month crying foul at pro-Right to Work Speaker Bill Howell (R-Stafford) and Majority Leader Morgan Griffith (R-Salem).

Dels. Howell and Griffith were publicly lambasted for their purported failure to "observe decorum" and for "bullying" or even "mugging" Big Labor politicians after a heated confrontation at Virginia's capitol in Richmond.

What did Mr. Howell and Mr. Griffith do to provoke such outrage?

They broke with the usual establishment GOP practice of trying to make their pro-forced unionism colleagues happy by helping them keep their own constituents in the dark about where they stand on the Right to Work issue.

Monopoly Bargaining Furnishes Pretext For Compulsory Union Dues

The speaker and the majority leader broke with establishment GOP "decorum" in reaction to Big Labor Del. Adam Ebbin's (D-Alexandria) introduction of legislation (H.B.852) that would have repealed Virginia's 15-year-old statutory ban on public-sector union monopoly bargaining.

Mr. Ebbin introduced H.B.852 at the behest of public-safety union bosses.

The bill would effectively have empowered government union officials in Virginia to seek, obtain, and wield 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."

At this time, Virginia and North Carolina are the only states that statutorily bar state and local government and teacher union bosses from corraling employees into such a union monopoly.

"Virginia's ban on public-sector monopoly bargaining, which was passed by a Democrat-controlled Legislature and signed into law by Democratic Gov. Doug Wilder, is sound policy," noted National Right to Work Committee Vice President Doug Stafford.

"Handing union bosses monopoly power to bargain the contracts of teachers

and other government employees, whose salaries are paid by taxpayers, undermines our democratic institutions.

"Moreover, it could pave the way for destruction of Virginia's popular Right to Work law.

"Union officials who have been granted the exclusive power to speak for union nonmembers as well as members in contract negotiations regularly cite that power as a pretext for enacting additional anti-Right to Work legislation that forces union nonmembers to pay dues or fees to the union into which they have been corralled."

'Virginians Now Know What's at Stake in Next Year's State Elections'

Mr. Ebbin apparently never intended to bring H.B.852 up for a vote this year. However, by introducing it, he sent a signal to government union bosses that, should Big Labor Democrats take over the House of Delegates in next year's state elections, they would push hard for such legislation.

Mr. Howell and Mr. Griffith decided that ordinary Virginians have a right to find out now which delegates will back

this union power grab once union strategists decide the time is ripe.

Therefore, in defiance of the wishes of Mr. Ebbin and other union-label legislators, Mr. Howell and Mr. Griffith pushed H.B.852 through committee and brought it to the House floor on January 24.

Pro-forced unionism House Democratic leader Ward Armstrong (Henry) protested vociferously that legislators who share his views on the monopoly-bargaining issue should not be forced to vote on the issue until they were ready.

But Mr. Howell and Mr. Griffith held firm and insisted on a floor roll call. At that point, Mr. Armstrong instructed his caucus members to remain seated rather than vote on H.B.852, one way or the other. In the end, just two of the chamber's 44 Democrats voted against public-sector monopoly bargaining.

"Pro-Right to Work Virginians now know what's at stake in next year's state elections," commented Mr. Stafford.

"If Ward Armstrong takes over the House of Delegates, the overwhelming majority of Democratic legislators are likely to go along with a scheme to foist union monopoly bargaining on public-sector employees." 📌



Big Labor politicians in Virginia are clearly eager to foist union monopoly bargaining on public employees,

including teachers. But they want no public debate about their plans until they're ready.