

# Union Monopoly Especially Harmful to Schools

## *Teacher Union Bosses Often Dictate With Whom They Will Negotiate*

It is always bad public policy to corral all the employees in a government-defined "bargaining unit" into one union. That forces all the employees in the "unit," union members and nonmembers alike, to accept that union as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent in dealings with their employer.

However, government-imposed union monopoly bargaining over employees' pay, benefits, and working conditions does far more harm in some instances than it does in others.

In private businesses, the employer or manager negotiating with the union monopoly-bargaining agent has a strong incentive to do everything possible, under the constraints of compulsory unionism, to see to it that employees are rewarded appropriately for their individual talents and efforts.

Business owners and managers know that, if they fail to do everything they can to encourage each of their employees to do their best, they will put the very viability of the enterprise at risk.

In most unionized government agencies, elected officials and managers have far less incentive to try to get around Big Labor opposition and treat employees equitably. But they at least know that, if they fail to stand up to the union bosses, they or the people who appointed them may well face electoral repercussions.

The incentives are worst of all for elected members of public school boards.

The overwhelming majority of school districts around the country choose school board members in extraordinarily low-turnout elections that occur during various months, but not in November of even-numbered years.

### **Union Bosses' Goal: Make The Union the Sole Means By Which Teachers Benefit**

Consequently, concerned citizens face far greater obstacles in countering the might of the union political machine in school board elections than in state and federal elections.

"Understandably enough, the average voter rarely finds the time to learn much about school board candidates before going to the polls—if he or she even remembers an election is occurring," commented Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.



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**Thousands of local school boards across the country continue to stand up for the individual teacher's Right to**

**Work. But all too many school board members today are in Big Labor's pocket.**

"But officials of the mammoth National Education Association [NEA] and its affiliates, as well as officials of other teacher unions, pay very close attention to school board elections and pour millions of dollars in teachers' forced dues and fees into such elections.

"That's why many public school boards around the country are actually handpicked by teacher union bosses."

In an essay published last month in the *Education Gadfly* blog, education investigative journalist Mike Antonucci summed up the agenda teacher union bosses implement when they control both sides of the bargaining table: Make the union "the sole source of teacher advancement, benefit and protection."

"If you receive a raise or promotion based on your own performance, why do you need a union?" Mr. Antonucci explained.

"If a math teacher in a low-income school can receive more money than a kindergarten teacher in a wealthy suburban school, the math teacher doesn't need the union (he's making more money based on his performance) and the kindergarten teacher doesn't need the union (he hasn't seen an extra dime).

"They both need the union only if it is the sole means by which to benefit."

### **Rolling Back Teacher Union Monopoly Bargaining Is Only Acceptable Solution**

The toxic impact that the forced dues-funded teacher union political machine has in local school board elections is very widely acknowledged.

Some cynical pundits, such as former Clinton Administration appointee Matt Miller, have even recently advocated scuttling America's already-embattled tradition of local control of schools as a means of "remedying" the problems caused by union monopoly bargaining!

"Local control of schools, to the extent it even exists any more, is not a problem for American education," countered Mr. Mix.

"And the only viable remedy for the gross mismanagement of employee relations in public schools almost nationwide today is to curtail sharply or eliminate altogether teacher union officials' monopoly-bargaining privileges." 📌