

# Teacher Union Bosses Derail \$13.2 Million Grant

## *Washington State Loses Program to Encourage Advanced Coursework*

Teacher union officials are frequently criticized for favoring the interests of teachers over those of schoolchildren, parents and taxpayers. But generally speaking, that criticism gives teacher union officials too much credit.

In reality, teacher union bosses' highest objective is Big Labor monopoly power to negotiate teacher contracts -- and union monopoly bargaining often results in lower pay for teachers.

One outrageous recent example of how teacher union monopolists harm many teachers as well as schoolchildren, parents, and taxpayers occurred in Washington State.

Last month, the Evergreen State lost out on a \$13.2 million, privately funded grant designed to "increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses in math, science and English," as the *Seattle Times* reported.

Teachers selected for the program, sponsored by the Texas-based National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI), would have received intensive training and coaching as well as higher pay.

Following the successful blueprint they established in Texas, which prohibits teacher union monopoly bargaining, NMSI managers insisted that they be permitted to compensate teachers directly, and provide additional pay based on student achievement.

### **Teacher Union Bosses Could Have Requested a Waiver, But Chose Not to Do So**

Just last year, an analysis by a Cornell University economist linked NMSI's program, including its approach to compensation, with a 30% rise in the number of students with high SAT and ACT scores.

Nevertheless, top bosses of the Washington Education Association (WEA/NEA) teacher union flat out refused even to consider allowing NMSI to compensate teachers directly.

And because of Washington State's law authorizing teacher union monopoly bargaining, there was absolutely nothing state elected officials or education appointees or local school boards could do to salvage the \$13.2 million NMSI grant without WEA union officials' acquiescence.

Steve Pulkkinen, WEA union bigwigs' handpicked negotiator over the grant,



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**Teacher union monopoly bargaining has just cost many math, science, and English teachers in Washington State an**

**opportunity to get free extra training and earn higher pay while helping more students do advanced work.**

publicly acknowledged that the union hierarchy could have requested a waiver to allow the grant to go through, but chose not to do so.

"The old adage, 'Monopoly has no use save abuse,' fits teacher union bosses in Washington State and around the country to a T," commented Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"It's Evergreen State legislators who gave WEA bosses monopoly-bargaining power in the first place, and it's legislators who are today responsible for perpetuating the monopoly-bargaining system.

"Politicians in Olympia who support union-boss special privileges, therefore, bear the primary responsibility for the NMSI debacle."

### **Forced Union Dues Add Insult to Injury**

Mr. Mix added that the abuses of teacher union officials are even worse in Washington than in a number of other states with teacher union monopoly-bargaining laws on the books.

The reason is that Washington, like 22 other states, statutorily authorizes Big Labor to get teachers fired for refusal to join or pay dues to an unwanted union.

"After the teacher union hierarchy has scuttled a program that would have resulted in extra training and higher pay for many talented teachers, it adds insult to injury to force such teachers to pay union dues, or be fired, even though they choose not to be union members," said Mr. Mix.

"And that's exactly what will be happening in Washington State once the next school year begins in the fall.

"The National Right to Work Committee is determined to block the passage of any additional teacher monopoly-bargaining and forced-dues laws and also to roll back all such laws that are already in place.

"Due to the enormous entrenched power of teacher union bosses, this will be a long, difficult battle. But we are making progress.

"Just last spring, the Committee helped secure the enactment of a Utah law that, Right to Work attorneys believe, will effectively abolish monopoly bargaining in the Beehive State's public schools."

Mr. Mix vowed that the 2.2 million Committee members would do everything possible over the next few years to help other states emulate Utah by effectively or expressly prohibiting union monopoly bargaining in public education. 