

# 'The Ball's in the Governor's Court'

## *Will Chet Culver Okay Another Attack on Hawkeyes' Right to Work?*

During the 2007 and 2008 sessions of the Iowa Legislature, union lobbyists in Des Moines employed every conceivable tactic to ram through the state Senate and House legislation to gut or repeal Iowa's Right to Work law.

Union bosses even threatened to recruit and bankroll 2008 primary challengers to run against Democrat legislators who refused to back forced union fees.

However, the National Right to Work Committee and its grass-roots ally, the Des Moines-based Iowans for Right to Work Committee, energized freedom-loving Iowans to fight back every step of the way.

And last April the Big Labor politicians who run the Iowa House finally backed down and adjourned the 2008 session without ever bringing up for a vote S.F.413, a forced-union-fee bill that had been rammed through the state Senate in 2007.

### **Right to Work Supporters Ready For Another Battle**

But as the 2009 legislative session begins this month, Iowa's 62-year-old Right to Work law, which prohibits the firing of both private- and public-sector

employees for refusal to pay dues or so-called "agency" fees to an unwanted union, remains in jeopardy.

Because of the Obama-Biden blowout victory in Iowa, returning House Speaker Pat Murphy's (Dubuque) Democratic caucus is expanding to 56 seats (out of 100) this year, compared to 53 seats during the 2008 legislative session.

Nevertheless, several union-label Democratic candidates in close races were defeated last November because of their unwillingness to stand up for Iowa's Right to Work law.

Consequently, Mr. Murphy and Big Labor Senate Majority Leader Mike Gronstal (D-Council Bluffs) are unlikely to launch another anti-Right to Work assault unless Democratic Gov. Chet Culver vows publicly to lead the fight.

Last month Mr. Gronstal bluntly told the *Des Moines Register*: "The ball's in the governor's court." But he also indicated he thought it was "highly likely" pro-forced unionism legislation would come up this year.

In early 2007, Gov. Culver publicly vowed to sign legislation forcing Iowa workers who choose not to join a union to pay union fees in order to keep their jobs.

But back then he was freshly elected and did not have to face Iowa voters again for more than three years.

### **'Chet Culver Faces A Tough Decision'**

Mr. Culver may decide he doesn't want to thumb his nose at the overwhelming majority of Iowans who support their Right to Work law yet again when, in order to retain the governorship, he has to face the voters in less than two years.

"Chet Culver faces a tough decision early this year," said Doug Stafford, vice president of the National Right to Work Committee.

"Will he anger Iowa union bosses by refusing to help them get forced-unionism privileges, or will he outrage the 78% of Iowans who, according to a recent poll by the respected firm Research 2000, support retention of their Right to Work law?"


Mr. Stafford added that Mr. Culver would not quell pro-Right to Work Iowans' concerns simply by refusing to endorse forced-union-fee legislation at this time.

"By joining the Gronstal-Murphy attack on Iowa's Right to Work law two years ago, Mr. Culver betrayed freedom-loving citizens in the Hawkeye State," Mr. Stafford explained.

"In order to reassure such citizens that he has learned his lesson, Mr. Culver must apologize publicly for supporting compulsory-unionism legislation two years ago, and admit that such schemes are both morally wrong and economically harmful.

"Mr. Culver must also vow never again to support forced-union-fee legislation.

"And he must vow to oppose other Big Labor power grabs, such as the expansion of government union bosses' monopoly-bargaining power to negotiate employees' pay, benefits, and working conditions.

"Just as Mike Gronstal said, the ball's in the governor's court. The question is whether he intends to keep playing for Big Labor's team, or instead join up with ordinary Iowa citizens who believe no one should be forced to bankroll a union in order to get or keep a job." 



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In 1980, Iowans who were outraged by then-U.S. Sen. John Culver's (D, left) pro-forced unionism voting record sent

him packing after one term. But his son, Gov. Chet Culver, could still repudiate forced unionism.