

December 5, 2006

Letters to the Editor  
Des Moines Register  
P.O. Box 957  
Des Moines, Iowa 50304  
Via email: letters@dmreg.com

Dear Letters Editor:

David Yepsen is a fine reporter, but he made a mistake about Iowa's Right to Work law in a recent column.

On November 28, Yepsen wrote that, under a so-called "agency"-fee scheme likely to be pushed forward by Iowa's newly-minted Democratic legislative leadership early next year, union nonmembers "in union shops could be required to pay dues to the union for services the union provides all employees." The fact is, when union officials seek and obtain the power to act as the "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent for all the employees in a shop, union nonmembers are forced to accept "services" they don't want and never asked for.

Furthermore, union monopoly bargaining is undeniably detrimental to many employees' interests. For example, state affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA) teacher union have time and again bitterly fought efforts by local school boards to offer higher pay for hard-to-fill teaching positions in math, science, and other subject areas. Why should math, science, and other teachers with special talents who aren't union members be forced to pay for the "benefit" of receiving lower pay than they otherwise would?

Earlier, in his November 21 column, Yepsen suggested that enactment of agency-fee legislation would differ from repeal of Iowa's Right to Work law. In reality, even in non-Right to Work states, it hasn't been legal to force workers to become full union members since the U.S. Supreme Court handed down its *General Motors* decision in 1963. The special coercive power Organized Labor wields in non-Right to Work states is the power to collect forced union fees from nonmembers – and that's the precise coercive power Iowa union bosses will get if an "agency"-fee scheme is enacted.

Respectfully,

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