

# Forced-Unionism Abuses Exposed

The facts Big Labor bosses would rather you didn't hear about.

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*Compulsory unionism breeds corruption. In each issue of "Exposed," the National Right to Work Committee will highlight yet another example of union-boss abuse spawned and perpetuated by Big Labor's government-granted privilege to force workers to pay union dues, or be fired.*

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## **'The NEA Position on 9/11 Is Not as Sad As Seeing Teachers Being Run Over by the NEA'**

Over the past few weeks the hierarchy of the National Education Association (NEA) teacher union has been roundly criticized by many commentators, including some normally NEA-friendly ones, for the lesson plans the union prepared and posted on the Internet ([www.neahin.org](http://www.neahin.org)) to commemorate last September 11's terrorist attacks.

The NEA bosses' lesson plans preach ad nauseam about what they consider to be improper ways for Americans to respond to the deliberate murder of nearly 3000 of our fellow citizens and foreign nationals, but have relatively little to say regarding the immorality of the attacks themselves.

Overall, the plans do not focus on imparting information that schoolchildren do not already know. Instead, teachers are told to "give students the opportunity to discuss and have validated their feelings about the events of September 11 in a nonjudgmental discussion circle."

Syndicated columnist George Will undoubtedly spoke for many Americans when he deplored this "emphasis not on learning but on feelings, not on good thinking but on feeling good."

However, one key factor nurturing the NEA bosses' mentality was overlooked by Mr. Will and other commentators.

If the NEA and its numerous state and local subsidiaries were true private organizations that could rely only on dues freely contributed by voluntary members to sustain themselves, the NEA brass almost certainly never would have concocted their controversial 9/11 lesson plans.

In 20 states employing more than half of America's public-school teachers, state law authorizes teacher union officials to get school employees fired for refusal to pay union dues or "fees" as a job condition. And an additional 13 states employing another 16% of school employees statutorily authorize union officials to force schoolteachers to accept a union as their "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining agent in contract negotiations.

Outside of the 20 states that authorize forced dues for teachers, the share of K-12 school employees who belong to the NEA has shrunk significantly over the past decade. But NEA bosses are apparently not too concerned, because their lock-grip on public school employment in states in the Northeast and along the West Coast keeps their overall membership ranks, now at 2.7 million, rising.

A recent exchange between school employees regarding the NEA's 9/11 lesson plans, recorded on the discussion board of the Deer Valley United School District, located near Phoenix, Ariz., succinctly expresses the contempt of most rank-and-file teachers for official NEA pronouncements.

When one union opponent posted a news article regarding the lesson plans, not one school employee in the district, where union membership is voluntary thanks to state law, defended them.

Instead, one school employee who, as a rank-and-file member of the NEA and its Deer Valley Education Association subsidiary, was not eager to hear the NEA hierarchy criticized, responded: "[D]o not attack [teachers] for something that is out of their control. . . . Personally, I do not even open up the NEA postings."

Another teacher rejected such explanations:

"How many times do I tell my children that they are judged by the company they keep. You make it clear you do not agree with the NEA (national), yet you not only associate with them, you fund them!

"How responsible is it to ignore what YOUR leaders are telling the world about what YOU should teach. You may choose to ignore them but YOU are reflected in their policy proclamations. . . . [T]he NEA position on 9/11 is not as sad as seeing teachers being run over by the NEA. More power to the teachers! Not the NEA."

The power of such arguments helps explain why the NEA's "market share" of school employees fell by an average of 20% during the 1990's in Arizona and six other states that bar monopoly bargaining and forced union dues in public education.

By fighting to increase the number of states that respect teachers' freedom of choice, the National Right to Work Committee and its members are hastening the day when NEA officials will be forced either to stop spending educators' dues on dubious projects like its 9/11 lesson plans, or face a continual, nationwide hemorrhaging of its membership ranks.