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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Teamster Union Bosses Interrogate Money Managers: Are You Now, or Have You Ever Been, a 'Card-Check' Bill Opponent?

Despite spending an estimated $1.1 billion in 2007 and 2008 on electioneering efforts designed, first and foremost, to install a U.S. Congress and President who would rubber-stamp the cynically mislabeled "Employee Free Choice Act" in 2009, Big Labor is now hard pressed to get the 60 Senate votes it needs to bring this scheme up for a final vote in the upper chamber.

But top union bosses are far from ready to give up. Instead, they are now implementing a strategy that they believe can propel their pet legislation (introduced in this Congress as S. 560 and H.R. 1409), or an alternative measure that uses other means to accomplish the same objective, through the Senate and House and onto President Obama's desk.

What is that strategy? Intimidate opponents of S.560 and H.R. 1409 into shutting up and sealing up their wallets.

Union strategists' calculation is obvious: If they can just hinder Right to Work supporters and their allies from mobilizing opposition to S. 560/H.R. 1409, the handful of wavering senators whose votes will decide this issue will end up going Big Labor's way.

It's understandable why the union hierarchy doesn't think it can win a fair fight over this legislation. S. 560/H.R. 1409 would effectively abolish secret-ballot elections over unionization by ensuring union organizers can always acquire "exclusive" (monopoly) bargaining privileges solely through the acquisition of signed "union authorization cards."

Except in the 22 Right to Work states, the "card-check" power grab would help union bosses force even more employees to pay union dues as a job condition, as well as accept a union as their monopoly-bargaining agent. The bill is so flagrantly abusive that, after hearing from large numbers of Right to Work-mobilized constituents about the legislation early this year, severally normally pro-forced unionism senators either said they would vote against it in the 111th Congress, or expressed serious reservations about it.

But now union officials are trying to cripple the opposition to the card-check bill by warning businesses, large and not-so-large alike, not to say or do anything that could hurt this bill's prospects. In one especially outrageous case, officers of the notorious Teamsters union, who wield unchallenged control of tens of billions of dollars in workers' pension funds, are now exploiting those funds to intimidate the professionals whose job it is to invest that money prudently.

In a form letter that was recently mailed out to leading pension investment managers, and subsequently leaked to the Arlington, Va.-based media outlet *Politico*, Cleveland Teamster officers and pension trustees Albert Mixon and Carl Pecoraro declared that "lobbying" and "contributing to the lobbying efforts of other organizations" against S. 560/H.R. 1409 "adversely affect" Teamster pension funds.

Mr. Mixon and Mr. Pecoraro then instructed investment managers to fill out a form included with the survey to "disclose your firm's . . . spending [including, specifically, support for National Right to Work] and activity with regard to this important issue and return it" to them "within the next couple of weeks."

The survey itself, which has apparently been sent out to investment managers by top bosses of several unions, not just the Teamsters, inquired as to whether the investment firm had "taken a position in . . . opposition to the passage of" S. 560/H.R. 1409 or made "campaign contributions in part or in whole based on a candidate's expressed . . . opposition to" this legislation.

The Mixon-Pecoraro letter, as thuggish as it is, does not directly threaten to withdraw Teamster pension money from firms that acknowledge opposing S. 560/H.R. 1409 or refuse to fill out their surveys. That's probably because the Teamster hierarchy knows full well that the vast majority of Teamster-"represented" workers and retirees don't want their pension money exploited as a lobbying weapon.

But Teamster and other union bosses apparently calculate that the mere veiled threat of quickly withdrawing billions and billions of dollars in unionized workers' retirement money from a firm, especially in these uncertain times, will be enough to intimidate managers into ignoring what they think is right and dropping their opposition to the "card-check" power grab.

So far, according to *Politico*, there's no sign that any investment firms have backed out of the "card-check" fight in response to the union bosses' latest intimidation tactics. At the very least, though, the fact that Big Labor is stepping up such tactics now indicates that the battle over S. 560/H.R. 1409 is a long, long way from over.

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