

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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Will Seattle Become 'The Next Detroit'?

Boeing's October 28 announcement that it would open a second 787 assembly line in Right to Work South Carolina, rather than in the Seattle suburbs where the company has had a large presence for decades, is still sending shock waves throughout forced-unionism Washington State.

With its new North Charleston production line, Boeing is expected to create 3800 new full-time jobs and make direct and indirect investments of more than \$5 billion in South Carolina over the next 15 years. And Boeing has made it clear that a major factor in its location decision was the desire to avoid labor strife like the International Association of Machinists (IAM/AFL-CIO) union boss-directed strike last year that cost the company an estimated \$5.2 billion, or \$100 million a day, in deferred revenue

The Palmetto State's Right to Work law keeps such Big Labor abuses in check by prohibiting the firing of employees for refusal to join or pay dues or fees to an unwanted union. Thanks to the Right to Work law, rank-and-file employees can hold Big Labor accountable by "voting with their feet" if union officials abuse their power.

Unfortunately for Washingtonians, their elected officials' ongoing refusal to approve a similar ban on compulsory unionism is very likely to cost the Evergreen State many additional thousands of good jobs in the aerospace and other industries over just the next few years.

As AP business writer Gene Johnson pointed out in an October 30 analysis, in the next three to five years, "Boeing is expected to decide on replacement planes for its best-selling 737 and 777 models and where they will be built. It's also trying to land a contract to build a 767 tanker for the Air Force. Unless the relationship with organized labor improves, these jobs could wind up out of state – and out of union, too"

The Evergreen State's enormous international trade sector, on which the jobs of one out of four Washington employees depends, is also seriously threatened by the greed of Big Labor bosses wielding forced-unionism special privileges. The U.S.'s International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU/AFL-CIO)-controlled West Coast ports have "already lost four percent of their market share of Asian cargo to East Coast and Canadian ports over the past few years," according to the Seattle *Pilot's* Joel Connelly. And yet another diversion looms once the Panama Canal is widened in 2014.

Nevertheless, shortsighted ILWU bosses continue to obstruct changes in antiquated work rules that result in poor productivity at marine terminals. And in this fall's elections, ILWU and other union officials pumped more than \$250,000 in cash alone, not to mention far larger hidden, forced dues-fueled "in-kind" spending, into efforts to tighten Big Labor's grip over the Seattle Port Commission.

Even Washington *Post* economics writer Steven Pearlstein, once an advisor to Big Labor Sen. John Durkin (D-N.H.) and still a stubborn apologist for compulsory unionism, admits that the union boss-inculcated "them vs. us" workplace mindset is now threatening to turn Seattle into "the next Detroit."

Similarly, union-label U.S. Congressman Jay Inslee (D-Washington) admits that Boeing managers chose to locate the new 787 line in Charleston, rather than the Seattle suburbs, because "they didn't have a labor relationship they were satisfied with. And that was just the reality."

However, to quote Mr. Pearlstein again, there is "nothing inevitable" about continuing economic decline for Seattle. The same is true for Washington State as a whole.

Elected officials in Olympia, the Evergreen State's capital, could do a lot to ensure that Boeing's recent 787 decision doesn't mark the beginning of a much larger exodus of good jobs from the Northwest.

As Boeing engineer Michael Butcher, a resident of Issaquah, Wash., explained in a letter to the editor published in the Seattle *Times* November 4, "the real issue driving employers and workers away from Washington . . . is the corrupt system of compulsory unionism."

Mr. Butcher elaborated: "Real employee free choice makes unions accountable, which unfortunately most union bosses see as a threat to their preferred business model. . . . Until Washington embraces real employee free choice, it's inevitable that this state will continue to lose employers and workers to . . . [Right to Work] states like South Carolina."

Mike Butcher is personally forced to fork over union "agency" fees to keep his job, and IAM union bosses have repeatedly tried to get him fired for refusing to fork over to them even more money than they can legally extract from union nonmembers like him. For his sake and for the sake of all Evergreen State employees, legislators in Olympia should at last stand up to union lobbyists and pass a Right to Work law.

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