

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.

Vague 'Job Growth' Talk Won't Rescue Languishing Big Labor-Controlled States

Just a few months ago, millions of Americans were dismayed by reports, based on official U.S. Labor Department Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data, that from 1999 through 2009 our country endured a "lost decade" in private-sector employment. In this context, the term "lost decade" refers to annual BLS statistics showing that in 2009 there were 107.95 million private-sector jobs nationwide, roughly 370,000 fewer than in 1999, when there were 108.32 million.

Americans are right to be deeply concerned by such national data, but they can easily mislead us. Exactly half of the 50 states actually experienced a net gain in private-sector employment during the "lost decade," and the five biggest absolute gainers, Arizona, Florida, Texas, Nevada, and Virginia, added a combined total of more than 1.6 million private-sector jobs. Meanwhile, California, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan and Ohio, the five states shedding the most private-sector jobs, lost a net total of more than 1.9 million.

The five biggest job gainers have one common characteristic: They all have Right to Work laws on the books that prohibit the firing of employees for refusal to join or pay compulsory fees to an unwanted union. Not one of the five biggest job losers has such a law. Consequently, workers in these states are routinely forced into a union as a job condition. Aggregate private-sector employment in the 22 Right to Work states increased by 3.7% during the "lost decade," even as it fell by 2.8% in the 28 forced-unionism states.

The sharp disparity is no coincidence. Leading labor economists such as Dr. Richard Vedder of Ohio University have shown repeatedly that forced unionism hinders job creation.

Big Labor's counterproductive work rules and fomentation of the "hate-the-boss" mentality lead to less employment growth or, very frequently, employment losses in the unionized businesses themselves. On top of that, union bosses funnel a huge chunk of the forced dues and fees they collect with federal labor law's abetment into efforts to elect and reelect state and local, as well as federal, Big Labor politicians who support higher taxes and more red-tape regulation of businesses.

Early this month, voters in a number of forced-unionism states with chronically poor job-expansion records sent a strong message they aren't happy with the status quo by voting out hundreds of Big Labor-"friendly" state legislators and electing new governors who aren't beholden to the union brass.

Thanks to unhappy voters, the erstwhile union-label Democratic speakers of the Indiana, Michigan and Ohio Houses of Representatives, among many other state House and Senate chiefs, will no longer be calling the shots when those chambers convene at the beginning of next year.

The incoming legislative leaders in these long languishing states are now pledging to focus right away on improving their employment climates. If they are serious about bringing good jobs to Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and other troubled states, they must make eliminating compulsory union dues and fees in the workplace one of their key objectives.

As the miserable failure of the \$800+ billion "stimulus" package President Obama rammed through Congress nearly two years ago has reminded Americans, doling out tax subsidies and tax breaks to favored groups isn't the way to increase the overall number of jobs. The real way for elected officials to help is to terminate government policies that suppress job growth. And foisting unwanted unions on independent-minded employees and their employers is surely a policy that deserves to go.

Big Labor bosses and their favorite politicians benefit enormously from forced unionism, and so of course they always furiously oppose efforts to pass new Right to Work laws. That's why passing such laws is never easy, and takes time. But the years of dedicated effort it takes to pass a state Right to Work law lead to expanded freedom for employees and greater prosperity for everyone who isn't on a forced dues-funded payroll.

The citizens of forced-unionism states whose employment climates have long been inferior to those of Right to Work states and of the nation as a whole, in good times and bad times alike, deserve more than vague talk about "jobs" from the politicians whom they recently elected to make things better.

In particular, these citizens have a right to expect their state legislatures will, this year, consider and cast recorded votes on legislation revoking Big Labor's privilege to get a worker fired for refusal to pay dues or fees to a union he or she didn't ask for, and doesn't want.

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