Written by Robert Confer on September 20, 2011

NLRB Pushes Unions' Destructive Agenda

Although rarely looked at as such by the typical person, labor is an economic transaction. It's a simple trade — one where the worker willingly gives to his employer, in exchange for monetary and benefit compensation, the use of his physical and mental services. As with any free market economic activity, either party can prevent ongoing transactions, whether such termination is based on dissatisfaction with what the exchange garners or on the influence of supply and demand in the micro- and macro-markets.

Basically, the act of employment is really no different from making a purchase at the local grocery store.

Unions, though, don't see it that way. Whereas non-unionized employment sees equal strength and value between worker and the company, unionized plants are different. There, the workers are granted dominance in the transaction and the standard rules of fair and equal trade are thrown out the window. Through its perverse leftist outlook, organized labor views any given job as a right rather than a privilege.

This union stranglehold, coupled with unwavering support from a government that creates laws and regulations granting favor to collective units, can have an adverse effect on employers, forcing them to enter long-term contracts which can signal the death knell for even the most vibrant of businesses.

Look no further than General Motors for a prime example. The company went into bankruptcy for a variety of reasons, none greater than the issue of legacy costs which were brought on by decades of union bullying. The United Auto Workers forced GM into a cradle-to-grave approach for their human resource activities, making the company pay lavish pensions and provide lifetime health care. From the start, this business model (which smacks of Social Security and Medicare) was doomed. Matters worsened as GM lost a great deal of its market share when foreign manufacturers came to the United States and, without the union influences that saddled GM, were able to provide high-quality vehicles at lower prices while maintaining American-based manufacturing (despite the foreign label). As this occurred, GM saw its employment drop from 811,000 to 324,000 over the 20-year period from 1985 to 2005. That left the output of every worker to somehow provide for every 2.5 retirees. In 2006 retired workers accounted for two-thirds of GM's health care costs.

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As we well know, that was impossible to maintain. GM went bankrupt and was subsequently bailed out — *or rather the UAW workforce was bailed out* — by the federal government to the tune of $50 billion. It should be noted that union-led socialism killed a once powerful private enterprise while federal-led socialism forced it back to life utilizing the resources of a formerly strong economy. Such is the perpetual self destruction associated with market intervention. Had the free markets been left to flourish from the start — i.e., with no unionization — GM as we knew it would have been a sustainable company which could have survived without government assistance.

It's patently obvious that unions are dangerous. This is true not only at GM, but also in workplaces across America, including the public sector where unions have financially doomed such states as New York and California. Even so, this basic economic concept is not understood by — *nor is faith in the free market held by* — the federal government. Instead, the government assumes that the economy cannot flourish on its own and that government and union control over the markets is best for what ails us (ironically, the government cannot see that such a mindset is *exactly* what ails our sickened economy).

The Obama administration has taken this union protection and promotion to unprecedented heights. It's common knowledge that President Obama and the National Labor Relations Board have wreaked havoc upon many an employer as we attempt to crawl out of the recession.

None of the NLRB's haphazard efforts has been so widely scrutinized and justifiably-derided as its attempt to squash Boeing's ongoing development by penalizing the company for choosing right-to-work South Carolina for expansion rather than Washington State, where unions have been a thorn in Boeing's side for years.

While focusing intently on this NLRB misstep, many media outlets have missed something as equally sinister that will affect every employer in the United States. The NLRB, under its regulation introduced August 30 which will take effect November 14, will require that all employers who engage in interstate commerce post at their worksites an 11" x 17" poster which lists employees' rights.

Of course, the rights enumerated on the poster are pro-union. The signage must indicate that employees have the right to join a union, engage in collective bargaining, and go on strike. Similarly, it must also say that employers cannot take adverse action against union supporters, prohibit union talk during non-work hours, or threaten closure if a union is formed.

The NLRB has never before required employers to post notices at their facilities; it's debatable if it even has the power to do so. The purpose of the organization is to oversee union elections and investigate unfair labor practices.

It's obvious that the NLRB's intent — as illegal and unconstitutional as it may be — is to promote unionization. This comes at a time when private sector union enrollment has reached a low (6.9 percent) not seen since the inception of 1929's Wagner Act which says employers must allow and negotiate with unions. The NLRB and the Obama administration want to reverse that trend and make the private sector unionization rate match that of the public sector (36%).

This poster will serve as free advertising for unions — mandated advertising no less — by planting the seed for their consideration in workplaces where they may never have been contemplated. With the mainstream media painting corporations as "evil," our President identifying the high achievers as "too rich," and layoffs always on the horizon because of market uncertainty, there may be many young, scared, or easily-brainwashed workers who, upon seeing the union ad, might strive to bring such an organization to their workplace. Up to six million employers could be impacted by this ruling and its consequences. Frankly, these are dangerous times in our economy and the NLRB is making them more so.

With less than two months to go, there still is time to stop the NLRB's insanity from becoming a reality. It's imperative that entrepreneurs, managers, and workers who understand the harsh reality of unionization contact their Congressmen and ask them to support Representative Ben Quayle's bill, HR 2833. Introduced earlier this month, it would reverse the NLRB's decision. Considering that the House on September 15 (in defense of Boeing and other companies facing similar obstacles) passed a bill to prevent the NLRB from mandating where employers can and cannot set up shop, there is traction to overturn the poster requirement.

If the requirement isn't overturned, thousands of these posters will soon be replaced by "closed for business" signs, furthering the decline of our economy — one that is unable to achieve the wonders of free market capitalism because we have Big Government and Big Labor working together to do everything they can to ensure that it doesn't.