



How Monopolistic Teacher Unionism Is Undercutting Math and Science Education

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November 2007

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LABOR RELATIONS RESEARCH

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About the Author

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About the Organization

The National Institute for Labor Relations Research is an organization whose primary function is to act as a research facility for the general public, scholars and students. It provides the supplementary analysis and research necessary to expose the inequities of compulsory unionism.

The Institute is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a Section 501(c)(3) educational and research organization. Contributions and grants are tax deductible under Section 170 of the Code and are welcome from individuals, foundations, and corporations. The Institute will, upon request, provide documentation to substantiate tax-deductibility of a contribution or grant.

* * *

Nothing here is to be construed as an attempt to aid or hinder the passage of any bill before Congress or any state legislature.

Executive Summary

Most mainstream media reporting on the supply and demand for K-12 public schoolteachers across America ignores the dramatic differences for teachers at different grade levels and in different fields. Around the country, school officials typically report they have no trouble at all finding qualified people to teach in grades K-5 and middle and high school subjects like physical education, social studies, and English. However, school officials in every region of the U.S. frequently find it difficult if not impossible to recruit and retain qualified math, science, and special education teachers.

There are two reasons for the substantial and growing shortage of qualified teachers in fields like math and science. First, teachers and prospective teachers with this specialized knowledge can nearly always command much higher salaries in the private sector than they can in teaching. This is not nearly so true of other teachers. Second, the so-called “single salary schedule” used to determine teacher pay rates in the vast majority of school districts in the country does not allow school officials to offer higher pay for hard-to-fill teaching positions.

School officials who routinely fail to fill math and science teaching positions, or fill them only with teachers who actually specialize in other fields, would undoubtedly modify or scrap the single salary schedule, but for the entrenched opposition of teacher union officials, especially local and state officers of the National Education Association.

And teacher union officials have so far been very successful in blocking significant reforms of the single salary schedule because of state and local public policies authorizing them to act as the “exclusive” (monopoly) bargaining agents of all the K-12 teachers in a school district.

Introduction: Myopia in Minnesota?

A report recently issued by Minnesota 2020, a “progressive, nonpartisan think tank” based in St. Paul, exemplifies the myopic approach to teacher hiring and retention that has been pervasive in U.S. public schools for decades.

“Growing Gap: Minnesota’s Teacher Recruitment & Retention Crises,”¹ by Minnesota 2020 fellow John Fitzgerald, furnishes substantial evidence that, while it is very difficult for public schools across the state to recruit teachers at current salary levels in some subject areas, it is relatively easy to recruit teachers for other subjects and lower grade levels.

For example, the report quotes Ted Suss, superintendent of the K-12 public school in Wabasso, 110 miles southwest of Minneapolis:

For an open science position (for the 2007-08 school year), I had two fairly high-quality applicants from about 10 applications. One of the two turned down an interview because a better job came along, so I had one candidate left. But that’s just the way it is today. Physics and chemistry positions are extremely hard to fill. So are special education positions, especially teachers who work with emotional and behavioral disorders.

Spanish is tough, too. You have to put out every feeler you’ve got to find a Spanish teacher. But with elementary education or social studies, you put out an ad for one day and you get hundreds of applications.

Overall, more than 50% of Minnesota superintendents “report an ‘extreme teacher shortage’ in physics and chemistry, and nearly 50%” say “there is a shortage in special education.” Meanwhile, a key source for the Minnesota 2020 report has found that more than 70% of the state’s superintendents and administrative designees indicate there is either no shortage or a considerable abundance of elementary education, physical education, and social studies teachers.²

After learning of Minnesota 2020’s factual findings, any reader with a grasp of the basic economic principle of supply and demand might assume that the report would recommend that the state’s public schools offer substantially higher pay for hard-to-fill teaching positions in physics, chemistry, special education, and Spanish, but hold the line on pay for elementary school and physical education and social studies teachers.

To be more precise, any reader who knows at least a little about economics, but is not attuned to the weird politics of public school management, would make that assumption.

¹ Go to http://www.mn2020.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC=%7B049E72F9-290F-48AA-909A-A3053DFA13C0%7D&DE= on the Minnesota 2020 web site to obtain a copy.

² Minnesota Department of Education, “Teacher Supply and Demand: FY 2006 Report to the Legislature,” January 2007, p. 30.

Instead, Minnesota 2020 issued a policy recommendation that doesn't fit its findings at all: "For our schools to stay competitive, we should raise all teacher salaries. In addition, we should examine whether schools should offer incentives for high-demand subject areas."

Private-sector employers who need to make a profit to stay in business and even many public-sector employers understand that, if you are already attracting large numbers of qualified applicants for a job at the salary you currently offer, it makes no business sense for you to raise the amount you are offering.

Similarly, private-sector employers and even many public-sector employers understand that if you are attracting so few qualified applicants for a job at the salary you currently offer that the job has gone unfilled for some time, or is being filled by someone who isn't qualified, you need promptly to raise the amount you are offering. Merely to "consider" offering "incentives" to persuade a qualified applicant to accept the job even though you haven't changed the basic offer isn't an acceptable alternative.

Are "think tanks" like Minnesota 2020 really unable to see what employers can see easily? The real problem in the Gopher State and elsewhere is not myopia among education policymakers and those who advise them, but an unwillingness to take on the powerful special interest that opposes application of the principle of supply and demand to public schoolteacher compensation.

‘Typically, Unions Want To Pay All . . . Teachers On the Same Schedule’

Education reformers who dare to propose that shortages of qualified teachers in fields like chemistry, math, and foreign languages be addressed by raising salaries for teachers in those fields regularly meet with stony stares from school managers who must win the acquiescence of teacher union officials to make such a change.

For example, this June the Business-Higher Education Forum (BHEF), a non-partisan group of business, foundation, and higher education leaders, issued a report concluding that America will have a deficit of more than 280,000 math and science teachers by 2015.³

And in contrast to Minnesota 2020 and many other "think tanks," the BHEF boldly recommended boosting salaries for math and science teachers, as well as a host of other reforms, to address the shortage.

Soon after the BHEF issued its report, the Fargo (N.D.) *Forum's* Tracy Frank discussed its recommendations with several school executives in North Dakota and Minnesota.

³ Business-Higher Education Forum, "An American Imperative: Transforming the Recruitment, Retention and Renewal of Our Nation's Mathematics and Science Teaching Workforce," Washington, D.C., 2007. Visit www.bhef.com to obtain a copy.

They agreed with the BHEF's diagnosis. For example, Glen Moerke, principal of Pelican Rapids High School in west central Minnesota, acknowledged: "If the present trend continues, it will become very difficult to recruit. Math or science people can command a much higher salary in almost any other business."⁴

However, the North Dakota and Minnesota school executives immediately saw what, from their perspective, is a huge problem with the BHEF prescription for the math/science teacher shortage: "Administrators say agreements with teacher unions may not allow schools to offer higher . . . salaries in specified subjects."

Ron Nielsen, human resources director for the Moorhead School District in the Minnesota section of the Fargo metro area, resignedly explained: "Typically, unions want to pay all . . . teachers on the same schedule. To really get into that, you may create more issues than you solve."

An AP article published this fall regarding the math/science teacher shortage in South Dakota made it clear that teacher union officials at the national level as well as at the state and local levels oppose higher pay for hard-to-fill teaching positions. The article concerns an effort by state Sen. Ed Olson (R-Mitchell) to encourage school districts to, whenever necessary, "provide more money for teaching positions that are hard to fill, such as math and science"⁵

To accomplish this goal without unduly burdening South Dakota taxpayers, suggested Mr. Olson, schoolboards may "need a different salary schedule" than the current scale, which "rewards teachers for experience and advanced degrees," regardless of subject area. However, officials of the South Dakota Education Association (SDEA), the statewide teacher union affiliated with the 3.2 million-member National Education Association (NEA) union, are fighting against such "differential pay."

NEA Executive Director John Wilson provided the AP reporter with this morally preening rationalization for the opposition of the bosses of the NEA and its affiliates to differential pay: "Most science or math teachers recognize that they don't want to be part of devaluing the importance of English, or social studies, or even kindergarten."

Mr. Wilson's comment, of course, makes no sense. On average, university professors, whether public or private, or unionized or union-free, get paid far more than do public high school teachers. And many university professors belong to state and national unions that have many high school teacher members as well. By accepting significantly higher pay than high school teachers, are these unionized professors "devaluing" secondary education? Of course not. Similarly, high school physics and math teachers who believe that they, because they possess relatively rare skills, ought to be paid more than kindergarten teachers are not "devaluing" kindergarten or primary education.

Within higher education alone, as University of Missouri-Columbia economist Michael Podgursky recently pointed out in an interview:

⁴ Tracy Frank, "Math, Science Teachers Wanted," *The Forum*, June 25, 2007.

⁵ Associated Press, "Official: Teacher Pay Must Be Raised," *Daily Republic* (Mitchell, S.D.), October 22, 2007.

[F]inance professors make more than economists, and economists earn more than history professors. It's . . . simply [a] matter of supply and demand in the labor market. Some skills command higher returns outside of teaching than others. That doesn't demean history professors. History professors know they are likely to earn less money than finance professors (with exceptions like Stephen Ambrose) when they enter graduate school.⁶

The fact that officials of the NEA and NEA affiliates are unable to offer an even half-way plausible rationale for opposing differential pay doesn't prevent them from fighting it viciously and with grim effectiveness. And they fight differential pay with just as much fury in densely populated, high-cost states on the East and West Coasts, where nominal K-12 teacher salaries are typically far above the national average, as they do in heavily rural, low-cost states like North Dakota and South Dakota.

For example, a year ago this month, Massachusetts' leading newspaper reported that 48 school superintendents from across the state had begun "calling for cash incentives to attract math and science teachers, a new effort to compete with higher-paying private businesses that would change the way teachers are paid."⁷

Right off the bat, officials of the Bay State's NEA affiliate, the Massachusetts Teachers Association, announced they would urge then-incoming Gov. Deval Patrick (D) and other public officials to reject the superintendents' request, because "the union opposes . . . paying math and science teachers more than others."

Official NEA Policy 'Opposes Providing Additional Compensation' For Hard-to-Fill Teaching Jobs

Opposition to differential pay is not merely the personal opinion of NEA Executive Director Wilson or NEA officials in Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Massachusetts, and across the U.S. It is the official policy of the entire NEA hierarchy.

In July 2000, the NEA Representative Assembly passed a resolution that explicitly condemns offering higher pay to math, science, and foreign language teachers for positions a school district is having trouble filling than to any other teachers: "The Association opposes providing additional compensation to attract and/or retain education employees in hard-to-recruit positions."⁸

⁶ Michael Shaughnessy, "An Interview with Michael Podgursky: About Merit Pay and Teachers," *EdNews.org*, published September 16, 2007.

⁷ Maria Sacchetti, "School Chiefs Urge Cash Lure for Math and Science Teachers," Boston *Globe*, November 13, 2006.

⁸ To see the entire relevant part of the resolution, go to www.eiaonline.com/archives/20000705.htm -- education journalist Mike Antonucci's filing on the July 5, 2000 session of the NEA Representative Assembly for his Education Intelligence Agency blog.

If teacher unions had the same legal status as other private organizations, the across-the-board opposition of NEA teacher union officials to differential pay would be a significant, but not necessarily overwhelming, obstacle to school executives offering higher pay for math and science teachers.

However, state laws and local policies authorizing teacher union officials, typically officers of NEA affiliates, to act as the “exclusive” bargaining agents for all teachers in a school district dramatically increase the power of Organized Labor to prevent school boards and superintendents from implementing any compensation plan against union-boss wishes.

Thirty-four states now have “exclusive” representation laws on the books authorizing union officials to strip teachers and other school employees of their freedom to decide how they will negotiate with a school board over pay, benefits, and working conditions. Under these statewide teacher monopoly-bargaining laws, educators, including many who have chosen not to be union members, are forced to accept union officials as their “exclusive” negotiators in employment-contract talks.

Moreover, in all but a handful of the other 16 states, many local school boards have over the years caved into pressure from teacher union organizers and granted the bosses of an NEA local or other teacher union monopoly-bargaining power over the teachers in the district. Consequently, the vast majority of K-12 public-school teachers across America are subject to union monopoly control.

And in states and localities where union monopoly bargaining over public-school teachers is authorized and abetted by government policy, union officials regularly wield their monopoly-bargaining power to impose de facto salary controls over teachers in hard-to-fill subject areas like math and science.

The tool that union bosses use to cap the earnings of math, science, and other teachers is the so-called “single salary schedule.”

As a 2005 briefing paper issued by the Alexandria, Va.-based National Taxpayers Union (NTU) pointed out, the single salary schedule “determines the appropriate salary level for all teachers by looking exclusively at just two factors: level of education and years of experience.” Specifically, “subjects and grades taught by an instructor do not factor into the salary equation.”⁹

And since in the private sector college graduates with degrees in math, science, and other very demanding fields can obtain far better-paying jobs than other degree-holders, it’s not surprising that schools operating under a single salary schedule have trouble recruiting math and science teachers.

According to the NTU briefing paper, the single salary schedule became an entrenched institution during the 1960’s, just as union monopoly bargaining became pervasive in American public schools.

⁹ Matt Schultz, “Single Salary Schedules for Teachers: Sabotaging Public Education and Wasting Taxpayers’ Money,” NTU Issue Brief 155, September 6, 2005.

Economists Caroline Hoxby and Andrew Leigh, respectively of Harvard University and the Australian National University in Canberra, jointly sought a few years ago to pinpoint the reason or reasons why high-aptitude U.S. college graduates (who disproportionately major in challenging fields like science and math) are far less apt to become teachers in the early 21st Century than they were in the early 1960's.

In a 2005 article, Drs. Hoxby and Leigh summarized their findings:

[T]he overall decline in teacher quality corresponds to the rise of collective bargaining within education. Teacher unions won collective bargaining rights in key cities and states during the 1960's. Over the next 20 years, collective bargaining spread from state to state across the country.

As a result of union action, the average salary for teachers increased modestly. But as the average was edging upward, the range of the scale narrowed sharply [C]ollectively bargained contracts placed a premium on characteristics such as seniority and credentials rather than performance, further depressing the opportunities for the high-aptitude teacher.¹⁰

While the record shows teacher union officials don't deserve all the blame for the spread of the single salary schedule, they represented a very powerful force promoting it and are now clearly by far the most powerful force opposing any rollback.

Schools Currently Forced to Hire People Who Don't Know Much Math to Teach Math

Typically, elected officials and school administrators are so intimidated by the furious teacher union-boss opposition they know they will face if they try to introduce differential pay that they don't even try. And when they do try, they rarely succeed. On the other hand, NEA union officials' preferred "solution" of raising all teachers' salaries high enough to fill shortages that exist only for roughly 15% of K-12 positions is too flagrantly hostile to taxpayers' interests and too unrealistic to be achievable anywhere in the U.S.

Therefore, schools must frequently "hire people who don't specialize in math" to fill math positions, as the Boston *Globe* reported last year.¹¹

Common sense alone ought to tell parents, taxpayers, school administrators, and anyone else who cares about American education that, until public schools are ready to take the simple step of offering more money for math and science positions so that they can fill them with people who have a strong command of the subject matter they will teach, other reforms intended to improve math and science education are not likely to be very effective.

¹⁰ Caroline Hoxby and Andrew Leigh, "Wage Distortion: Why America's Top Female College Graduates Aren't Teaching," *Education Next*, Spring 2005, pp. 51-56.

¹¹ See Footnote 7, *supra*.

Moreover, a “growing body of research” indicates that

teachers’ subject-matter knowledge is one of the most important elements of teacher quality and that students, particularly in the higher grades, benefit most from teachers with strong subject-matter background.¹²

Differential pay is far simpler than many widely disseminated proposals to improve public education generally and math and science education in particular.

Take, for example, the related but separate policy of merit pay, that is, paying teachers of all subjects and all grade levels more if the teachers demonstrate greater ability and/or the students learn more. While there is much to be said for such a reform, it will never be easy to reach a consensus on what fair, impartial criteria for teaching ability and student progress should be. Several years ago, economists Michael Podgursky (cited above) and Dale Ballou (now at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn.), who support merit pay, acknowledged the inherent trickiness of implementing a merit-pay plan:

The tenuous connection between stated criteria and effective teaching makes it hard to explain why instructors were denied high ratings and bonuses. . . .

Prospective teachers will discount compensation that is contingent on future performance, given uncertainty whether and when such award will be made. . . .

In summary, while the evidence suggests that compensation could be more flexible than at present, considerable opposition would need to be overcome before differentiation of salaries on the basis of ability [or student achievement] could proceed to the point where it solves the problem with which we began: raising pay without triggering a substantial reduction in job opportunities.¹³

In contrast to merit pay, differential pay could rely solely on concrete data whose significance couldn’t plausibly be contested. Even the NEA union web site, in its “Information for College Students” section, furnishes evidence that objectively shows there is a crying need for differential pay.

According to NEA researchers, 41 states are currently experiencing a shortage of math teachers. Forty-three have shortages of science and special education teachers. Fourteen states don’t have enough foreign language teachers, while 10 don’t have enough for English as a Second Language (ESL) and/or “bilingual” education.

Meanwhile, just one state has an identified shortage of English teachers. Just one has a shortage of physical education teachers. And not one has a shortage of social studies, reading, kindergarten, or elementary school teachers.¹⁴

¹² National Science Board and National Science Foundation, *Science & Engineering Indicators – 2004 – Elementary and Secondary Education*, Arlington, Va., May 2004, p. 27.

¹³ Dale Ballou and Michael Podgursky, *Teacher Pay and Teacher Quality*, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Kalamazoo, Mich., 1997, pp. 108-9.

¹⁴ Information accessed from the “Student Program” section of the NEA web site at <http://www.nea.org/student-program/about/state.html> on November 8, 2007.

There's simply no denying that the single salary schedule is creating nearly nationwide shortages of teachers in math, science, and special education, or that by far the most cost-effective way of addressing the problem is to abolish the single salary schedule.

Tax Increases Not Needed to Provide Substantially Higher Pay For Math, Science Teachers

Complete abolition of the single salary schedule can also, over the course of a relatively short time, allow school districts to offer substantially higher pay for teachers in hard-to-fill subject areas without imposing additional burdens on taxpayers.

The reason is that the single salary schedule, in addition to dictating far-below-market pay rates for a relatively small share of teachers, also mandates above-market pay rates for all teachers who meet criteria that extensive research has demonstrated to have little or no impact on how well they teach and how much schoolchildren learn. Without the constraint of the single salary schedule, school boards that wished to spend their resources more effectively could phase out unproductive teacher incentives.

For example, Dr. Podgursky pointed out in the interview cited above that “nearly every salary schedule in the U.S. rewards teachers for earning an MA degree, whether related to their field or not.” And yet, “careful econometric studies of teacher value-added have consistently failed to find a single positive effect of teacher graduate degrees on student performance.”¹⁵ Gradually removing the automatic reward for receiving graduate degrees would free up a great deal of money in most school districts, because almost half of K-12 teachers today hold a master’s degree or higher.¹⁶

School districts also could free up funds to increase pay for math and science teachers by making the currently automatic pay increases granted to teachers after every year of employment contingent on meeting minimum performance standards. Dr. Podgursky explained why automatic increases for every teacher who doesn’t perform so abysmally as to get fired make no sense:

While nearly all studies find that brand new teachers are on average less effective than experienced teachers, the returns taper off fairly quickly. This is not to say that more experienced teachers should not earn more on average than less experienced teachers, but the differential should be based on something more than having a pulse for one year.

In practice, eliminating or substantially reducing automatic seniority pay increases for the roughly 20% of teachers whom school executives judge to be least effective should be much less difficult than implementing merit pay, as was discussed above. Unlike with merit

¹⁵ See Footnote 6, *supra*.

¹⁶ Richard Ingersoll, “Four Myths About America’s Teacher Quality Problem,” posted at http://repository.upenn.edu/gse_pubs/29/, University of Pennsylvania, 2004, p. 16.

pay, only a relatively small minority of teachers could potentially bristle at the fact that they were getting paid less than other teachers based on subjective criteria. And the overwhelming majority of teachers agree that a substantial minority of their colleagues don't deserve to be employed as teachers at all.¹⁷

However, as relatively simple as differential pay is, it is impossible to envision its implementation any time in the near future in any school district in which the officials of any NEA-affiliated teacher union wield monopoly-bargaining power over teachers of every subject at every grade level. Unlike the NEA brass, the hierarchy of the nation's second largest teacher union, the American Federation of Teachers, has at least conceded that the single salary schedule in its current form has a number of fundamental defects.¹⁸ Nevertheless, given their collectivist ideology, AFT-affiliated union officials armed with monopoly-bargaining privileges are also highly unlikely ever to acquiesce to higher pay for hard-to-fill teaching positions.

Therefore, the best opportunity for reforming the single salary schedule is in the 16 states that have no statute authorizing union monopoly bargaining in public schools.

As was noted above, even in these 16 states, many school boards, especially those in larger districts, have caved into union-boss pressure and granted a union monopoly-bargaining power over teachers, even though the school boards were under no legal requirement to do so. But this impediment to school reform is much less difficult to remove than statewide teacher monopoly-bargaining laws have proven to be.

Utah is one of the states where there is no teacher monopoly-bargaining law, but has nevertheless had widespread monopoly bargaining in public education. But early this year, the Utah Legislature passed and Gov. Jon Huntsman signed into law S.B. 56, which effectively makes it unlawful for any public school district or charter school to recognize any teacher union as the monopoly-bargaining agent of all teachers employed by the district or charter school.

‘Equal Access’ Legislation Can Break up Union Monopoly Control Over Teacher Salaries

Sponsored by state Sen. Mark Madsen (R-Lehi) and state Rep. Merlynn Newbold (R-South Jordan), S.B. 56 expressly requires school districts and charter schools to allow education employee associations equal access to school mailboxes and e-mail systems and school orientation programs.

Since S.B. 56's enactment, it is also more generally unlawful for a school to “establish or maintain structures, procedures or policies that favor one education employee association

¹⁷ See, e.g., Jay Mathews, “Teachers Agree: Fire a Third of Us,” *Washington Post*, June 22, 2004.

¹⁸ See “Professional Compensation” at <http://www.aft.org/topics/teacher-quality/comp.htm> on the AFT web site.

over another or otherwise give preferential treatment to any employee association,” or “explicitly or implicitly endorse any education employee association.”¹⁹

According to Milton Chappell, a staff attorney for the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation who has decades of experience preparing and arguing public-employee labor-law cases in courts at all levels, the direct implications of this language are clear.

Under the “equal access” law, it is no longer permissible for any public school district or charter school in Utah to recognize any teacher union as the “exclusive” (monopoly) bargaining agent of all teachers employed by the district or charter school. School districts and charters retain the right, Mr. Chappell explains, to bargain collectively with employees through representatives of the union they have chosen to join.

However, any school district or charter that agrees to negotiate with, or gives favors to, a particular teacher union must also agree to negotiate with, or give favors to, any nonunion teacher group, or any rival union, that asks to negotiate for its members or receive favorable treatment in the district.

And the fact that one teacher association has at some point won an election with a majority of teachers voting to have it as their representative does not in any way exempt a school district or charter from liability for endorsing that teacher association or for refusal to grant other teacher associations equal representation rights.

Mr. Chappell’s analysis of the Madsen-Newbold law has clear implications for school districts that are failing to find qualified math, science, and other teachers to fill open positions at the pay rate dictated by the teacher union boss-favored single salary schedule. In such a situation, Utah school officials may notify teachers that, if they are dissatisfied with their association’s representation on salary or other issues, they may change their representative by resigning from the association and becoming members of another.

Without monopoly-bargaining privileges, Utah union officials will not, in practice, be able to prevent school districts from paying math and science teachers the market rate, if school districts try to do so.

Furthermore, the political dynamics in the other 15 states that do not currently have teacher monopoly-bargaining statutes are favorable for enactment of “equal access” legislation similar to Utah’s new law. Even legislators who normally vote in accord with the NEA union hierarchy’s wishes will be hard pressed to explain what is wrong with legislation that allows school boards to recognize a union as the bargaining agent for its members only, as long as equivalent recognition is granted to any school employee association that seeks it.

In the past, union lobbyists have sought to dismiss the “members only” bargaining option by falsely claiming that such bargaining is prohibited by federal or state law. This claim was never true,²⁰ and just recently the top officials of seven large AFL-CIO-affiliated unions acknowledged it is false.

¹⁹ Subsection (4) of Section 53A-3-426 of the Utah Code.

²⁰ See, e.g., National Institute for Labor Relations Research, “Compulsory Unionism in Everything But Name . . .,” Springfield, Va., December 2006.

In a brief filed this summer with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), the heads of the United Steelworkers of America, the United Autoworkers, the International Association of Machinists, and four other unions both admitted in writing that members-only bargaining is permissible under current laws and declared that they wanted their members-only bargaining power expanded.²¹

Of course, the union officials and union lawyers filing this brief do not wish at all to do away with monopoly bargaining. Rather, they are eager to engage in members-only bargaining in workplaces where, despite their legal privileges, they are unable to impose monopoly bargaining.

However, as public awareness that members-only organizing is a legal option grows, it will become harder and harder for teacher and other union officials to defend government policies that authorize monopoly bargaining. And without pervasive union monopoly bargaining in public education, the single salary schedule would be quite vulnerable.

Therefore, despite the fact that union monopolists have controlled teachers' jobs at the vast majority of America's public K-12 schools for decades and continue to control them today, there's hope that the implicit caps on how much math and science teachers can be paid will be lifted not just in Utah, but across the country in the not-too-distant future.

²¹ See "In the matter of rulemaking regarding members-only minority-union collective bargaining" -- <http://efcaupdate.squarespace.com/home/2007/8/17/minority-bargaining-rulemaking-petition-now-available.html> -- submitted to the National Labor Relations Board August 14, 2007.



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THE PROBLEM

Organized labor has had a profound economic and political impact on the institutions of American power. Yet the far-reaching ramifications of that impact are largely unknown to the public. Academic interest in labor unions and labor relations is at its lowest point in decades.

While there has been a notable proliferation of private interest groups in recent years, none has exposed the excesses of America's union establishment from an academic perspective. Consequently, not enough light has been shed on one of the few remaining forms of tyranny left in America: compulsory unionism.

THE NEED

Labor policy in America has not reflected the will of its citizenry for decades because Big Labor's support in the academic community has allowed it to control debate. As a result, labor unions have not been subjected to the same degree of scrutiny as their counterparts in the corporate world.

In many cases, the interests and concerns of Americans who support the right to work without compulsion are ignored for lack of an academic support structure. Freedom of association has diminished because its proponents frequently are without the analysis and research necessary to effectively make their case.

Obviously, there is an urgent need for an organization that will draw together scholars and economists to perform objective and revealing research into the practices of America's labor unions. The National Institute for Labor Relations Research is such an organization.

THE PROGRAM

1. The Institute's primary function will be to act as a research facility for the general public, scholars and students. It will provide the supplementary analysis and research necessary to expose the inequities of compulsory unionism.

2. It will publish monographs, brochures and briefing papers designed to stimulate research and discussion with easy-to-read summaries of current events. The Institute will also conduct nonpartisan analysis and study for the benefit of the general public.

3. It will render aid gratuitously to individuals suffering from government over-regulation of labor relations and will provide educational assistance to those individuals who have proved themselves worthy thereof.

It is high time that self-interested union officials be confronted with the facts on how their brand of unionism has failed to improve general conditions for workers. With an intensive program of study and education, the National Institute for Labor Relations Research intends to do just that.

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