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Public School Teachers Reject Compulsory Unionism

One reason the Mackinac Center for Public Policy emphasizes a long-term view of progress in the battle for liberty over a short-term outlook is that ideas take time to percolate and filter through society. But once they do, action can be swift.

In 1998, a Mackinac Center study recommended that Michigan school districts and their employees remove from union contracts compulsory support clauses that unfairly force school employees to financially support a union, whether or not they are members. One public school recently applied that recommendation by negotiating a contract that permits individual teachers to decide for themselves whether or not to support the union.

Mid-Michigan Public School Academy, a Lansing charter school, and the local Michigan Education Association (MEA) affiliate signed the contract on Jan. 8, after it was unanimously ratified by teachers at a December meeting. Prior to contract negotiations, Mackinac Center experts advised members of the school's board of directors

about alternatives to compulsory unionism for their employees.

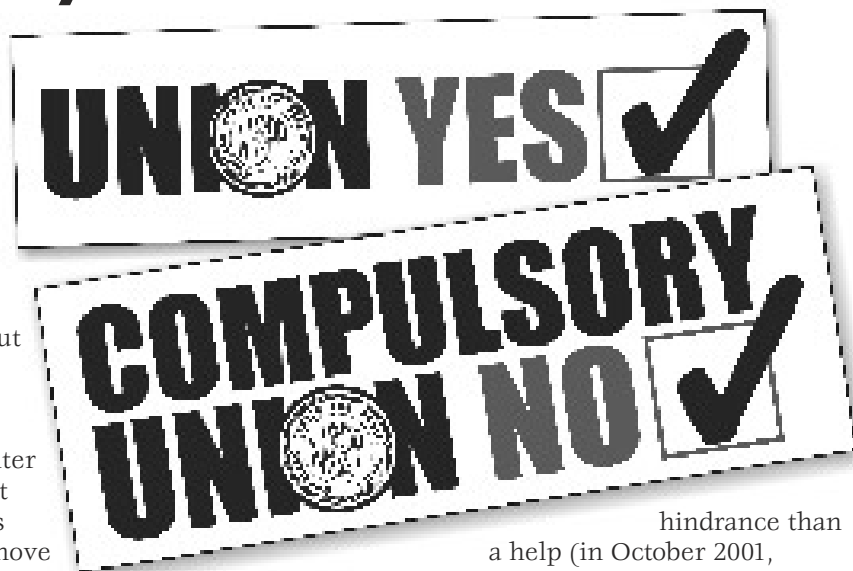
The contract specifies that union dues, which average about \$600 annually, will be deducted only after a teacher has chosen to join the union. Mid-Michigan is the only unionized public school in the state with such an arrangement. (Although all Michigan public school employees can technically refuse union membership, other districts require employees to be fired if they refuse to pay a union fee, regardless of membership status.)

Teachers who support voluntary provisions say that unions are often more of a

hindrance than a help (in October 2001, teachers at another charter school, Island City Academy, voted 12-1 to oust the MEA after collecting enough petition signatures to call for a decertification election). They also point out that many teachers vote against union representation in the first place. At Mid-Michigan, 25 percent of teachers voted against unionization in January 2000.

Mackinac Center labor experts frequently work with school boards to help them implement this, and other, recommendations.

The contract expires at the end of this school year. ■



"The Mackinac Center is widely credited with influencing the debate that led to new laws allowing charter schools and easing restrictions on school boards' privatization"

—Education Week, Feb. 20, 2002

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Mr. Smith Is in Washington



Joseph Overton
Senior Vice President

I was invited to the White House last year to discuss how state-based research institutes like the Mackinac Center for Public Policy could work with Bush administration officials to advance meaningful reform. I was reminded of the encounter in recent weeks as President Bush called for tariffs on imported steel, signed the largest federal intervention in education in U.S. history, prepared to direct more federal subsidies to religious institutions, and released plans to take \$100 million from hard-working American families and spend it on federal marriage instruction programs.

Now this may sound like a prelude to criticism of our president. After all, these measures are certainly contrary to the principles espoused by the Mackinac Center, and several even exceed the authority granted to Congress by the U.S. Constitution. But that would miss the point.

The problem is the good people Bush hired. This is the first time I have had so many personal friends and freedom-movement colleagues appointed to key positions within a presidential administration. And in the months since I sat in the Old Executive Office Building last year listening to them, I have been struck by the contrast. One day they were emphasizing that education is a state or local issue, the next day they were federally mandating the testing of every public school child in America. One day they were bemoaning \$5 trillion worth of failed Great Society programs, the next day they were in the newspapers defending federal marriage instruction.

Too many people today continue to invest their lives and their money in the fanciful hope—call it the Frank Capra Theory—that someday Mr. Smith will go to Washington, end the corruption, and restore our liberties. I am here to say that I know Mr. Smith, he went to Washington, and he lost his soul. As thoughtful and well intentioned as he is, he was sucked into the vortex of political pragmatism and transformed into a welfare state apologist. He is now mocking those who believe in principled, limited government and helping perpetuate the debilitating modern myth that it is wise and right to take resources from our communities and send them to Washington.

I have turned down several opportunities to go to Washington for one simple reason: This is a bottom-up revolution. Working at the state and local levels, the Mackinac Center does the tough work of building a constituency of informed leaders who will one day change their communities, then their states, and ultimately their nation. If you are reading this and still dreaming about a Washington revolution, pull out the membership envelope and join us. Fighting for freedom closer to home may not be as glamorous, but it's *real*.

Too many people continue to invest in the fanciful hope—call it the Frank Capra Theory—that someday Mr. Smith will go to Washington, end the corruption, and restore our liberties.

Joseph P. Overton

Experts Explore Retirement Economics, Education Investing

Is the Enron bankruptcy a cautionary tale that should make citizens reluctant to entrust their Social Security tax dollars to private retirement accounts? Will Michigan parents have wider school choice options as a

Issues and Ideas Luncheons of 2002, held in Lansing.

On Jan. 18, John Hood, president of the John Locke Foundation in Raleigh, N.C., explained to assembled journalists, lawmakers, and legis-

lative staffers how the Enron scandal shows the danger of putting all one's eggs in one basket. The big basket of Social Security, he said, is headed for the same fate as Enron unless citizens are allowed to diversify their government-man-

of a constituency that will become a dominant political force in the years ahead.

Approximately 70 policy-makers, education reformers, and other officials crowded the Mackinac Room in the House Office Building Feb. 25 to hear U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., discuss recent federal education reforms and his own tax-credit legislation, the "Voluntary Opportunities to Increase Contributions to Education (VOICE) Act." VOICE would allow a 75-percent tax credit for individual contributions of up to \$500 (or \$100,000 for corporations) to qualified tuition scholarship funds. Hoekstra, a member of the U.S. House Education and the Workforce and House Budget committees, cited the success of Arizona's tax-credit program, which has resulted in over \$33 million in donations to



Hood explains the merits of Social Security privatization, a policy the Mackinac Center called for in a 1999 report.

state scholarship funds and public schools since 1998.

Issues and Ideas luncheons are monthly forums designed to offer government officials a broader philosophical perspective on current topics, emphasizing free-market solutions to important policy questions. !



As little as 65 cents of every federal education dollar is actually spent in the classroom, Congressman Hoekstra tells policy-makers and officials.

result of President Bush's education reform proposals?

These and other questions were the focus of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's first two monthly

dated baskets with private retirement accounts. Hood elaborated with examples from his new book, "Investor Politics," in which he says Social Security privatization will contribute to the creation

Educators: Win a Palm m100

Have you ever had to comply with a school regulation that was an affront to common sense? Think of the most ridiculous, outrageous, or onerous state-imposed regulation and send it to us by April 1. The person who submits the state rule or regulation that makes the least amount of sense (as judged by our staff) will win a Palm m100 personal digital assistant.

Email your entries to Martens@mackinac.org or send via postal mail to:

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Center's Influence Felt on Panoply of Issues

Whether the subject was high-speed Internet access, labor policy, education reform, or coping with a sluggish economy, both state and national media sought out Mackinac Center for Public Policy experts for timely and reliable economic research. Here are some highlights:

- The Center got a boost Dec. 18 when Thomas Bray wrote his weekly column for the Wall Street Journal's OpinionJournal.com web site on the Mackinac Center and its impact on public policy in Michigan. Bray called the Center "one of the chief laboratories for the laboratories of democracy," and hailed its rise from humble beginnings in 1988 to become "a model" not only for state-based think tanks, but even for think tanks with a nationwide focus.
- If President Bush wants

the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to uphold union workers' *Beck* right not to be forced to finance Big Labor's politicking, he must replace current NLRB members with ones more sensitive to workers' freedom of association. That sage advice was dispensed to Wall Street Journal readers in a Jan. 21 letter to the editor by Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter. Several weeks earlier, Hunter and Labor Research Associate Paul Kersey met with the president and top federal labor officials to discuss labor reform strategies (see story on page 12). At a Feb. 27 conference, anti-*Beck* NLRB Chairman Peter Hurtgen stated the president has decided not to retain three of the NLRB's current four members, including Hurtgen.

- The Feb. 20 issue of Education Week, a national journal, carried a major feature on education policy research that stated "the Mackinac Center is widely credited with influencing the debate that led to new laws allowing charter schools and easing restrictions on school boards' privatization . . ." The story also revealed the Michigan Education Association's transparent attempt to route money through a front group that paid professors to "analyze" Mackinac Center research the union finds objectionable. The story quotes one of those professors saying that think tanks like the Mackinac Center have "coupled their documents with a very sophisticated publications and media strategy."
- Director of Science, Environment, and Technology Policy Diane Katz and Policy

Analyst Michael LaFaive researched the flaws inherent in Gov. Engler's plan for a state takeover of Michigan's high-speed Internet network

stitution to allow a universal tuition tax credit for educational expenses and contributions to scholarship funds.

- The following month,



(see story on page 5). Both pointed out how the private sector is efficiently meeting the demand for Internet access and that state intervention would only disrupt this process. Katz offered the free-market perspective in a Detroit Free Press point-counterpoint commentary and LaFaive in Associated Press interviews and a *Viewpoint* commentary printed in numerous papers statewide, co-authored with Western Michigan University economics professor and Adjunct Scholar Donald Alexander.

- In December, President Lawrence Reed and U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., co-authored an article for The Detroit News in which they offered "Proposal A+," a plan to amend the Michigan Con-

stitution to allow a universal tuition tax credit for educational expenses and contributions to scholarship funds.

- In a two-part series on school budget woes in Michigan, The Detroit News chided the Redford Union school district for turning down the Mackinac Center's offer to guarantee up to \$350,000 in savings if it would privatize transportation, cafeteria, and janitorial services rather than follow through on planned teacher layoffs. !

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Friedman Says Vouchers and Tax Credits Useful Route to Greater School Choice

Competition among schools is the key to successful education reform, according to Nobel Laureate Dr. Milton Friedman, the keynote speaker at a recent conference held in Salt Lake City and co-sponsored by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy.

The Jan. 18 conference brought together national experts on education reform, including Friedman and Mackinac Center Director of Leadership Development Mary Gifford, to discuss ways of expanding educational choice and freedom through such instruments as tax credits or vouchers.

Gifford explained to the crowd of roughly 300 state and

national officials, legislative staffers, parents, and education reformers and activists how tuition tax credits have increased opportunities for low-income and other students in such states as Arizona and Pennsylvania.

Friedman predicted that President Bush's recently signed education bill will have little positive impact because it increases spending without doing much to expand school choice.

Other featured speakers included panelists from co-sponsoring organizations American Legislative Exchange Council, the Milton and Rose Friedman Foundation, and the Heritage Foundation. Former Arizona Superintendent of Public



Utah state Sen. D. Chris Butters talks with Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman about Butters' tuition tax credit bill, developed with help from Mackinac Center education analysts.

Instruction Lisa Keegan, with whom Gifford worked closely as director of the Goldwater Institute's Center for Market-Based Education, updated

attendants on the continued success of that state's education tax credit at fostering a true education marketplace.

Education Excellence Utah organized the conference as part of its effort to advance school choice in the Beehive State. The group is promoting the "Utah Education Investment Act," a bill that incorporates features of the Mackinac Center's Universal Tuition Tax Credit proposal. The bill would allow for a credit of up to \$2,100 per student for individual taxpayers who contribute to tuition scholarship programs.!

Center Research Blunts Reach of Dubious State Internet Plan

Only days after its official launch, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's new Science, Environment, and Technology (SET) Initiative began making its presence felt in a key debate raging in Lansing over high-speed Internet access.

Late last year, Gov. Engler unveiled a plan to wire the state for high-speed, or broadband, Internet access to regions deemed to be "underserved" by private providers. But the plan has met with opposition in the Legislature following a string of analyses by SET Director Diane Katz released and distributed to legislators during four hearings in the Senate.

Katz and Policy Analyst Michael LaFaive's methodical dissection of the broadband legislation exposed a variety of unsubstantiated claims underlying the governor's plan and identified vast potential for higher costs and fewer choices for consumers. Presented with such evidence, members of the Senate Technology and



Mackinac Center scholar Dr. Donald Alexander examined the benefits of a free market in Internet access in a 1999 study debunking the "need" for government intervention.

Energy Committee demanded major changes in the proposal before moving the bills to the Senate floor.

At a packed committee hearing on Jan. 9, for example, Sen. Burton Leland, D-Detroit, cited a Mackinac Center analysis in questioning Public Service Commission Chair Laura Chappelle on why Lansing should compete with the private sector—which is already efficiently meeting consumers' demand—in offering high-speed Internet access. Leland's citation of Mackinac Center research drew applause from the audience, according to the Michigan Information and Research Service.

Mackinac Center comment on the broadband plan also was featured prominently in newspapers including the Detroit Free Press and Ann Arbor News and on numerous radio talk shows throughout the state.

Although substantive changes have been made to the original legislation, the broadband proposal remains flawed. The Mackinac Center will continue to explain the benefits of free markets over new government spending and regulation as action on the governor's plan moves to the House.!

Reed Helps Establish Freedom Movement in Africa

Whether it be privatization in Rwanda or the founding of a new free-market think tank in Kenya, the man one newspaper called “the Indiana Jones of Michigan” continues to log the miles promoting economic liberty around the world.

In January, Mackinac Center for Public Policy President Lawrence Reed traveled to Africa for two weeks on his latest “working

vacation,” generously underwritten by several anonymous donors. His first stop was Nairobi, Kenya, as the guest of James Shikwati, founder and president of the Inter Region Economic Network (IREN), the first free-market think tank in east Africa. There, Reed delivered two lectures on economics to an eager cross-section of Kenyan media, business, and academic leaders. Shikwati was introduced to free-market ideas in part



Reed (speaking in Nairobi, above) will help other groups such as IREN in his new role as a board member of the International Policy Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the institutions of a free society in countries around the world.



IREN founder and president James Shikwati will travel to Michigan to learn the mechanics of managing and organizing an effective think tank at the Mackinac Center's May Leadership Conference.

through Reed's column in *Ideas on Liberty*, the monthly journal of the New York-based Foundation for Economic Education.

“I would like to thank you . . . for delivering the first ever pro-free market speech in the East African region,” Shikwati wrote in a letter to Reed. “Your speeches helped boost IREN's image locally and internationally . . . IREN's future as a



The Rwandan government produces a bimonthly magazine entitled *Rwanda Privatization*, a recent issue of which stated the government's desire to “pull out of all its industrial and commercial activities.”

frontline free-market organization in Africa is now assured.”

“I think our man in Kenya is a diamond,” Reed afterward reported to the Atlas Foundation, which provided start-up capital to Shikwati. “I predict IREN will become a model for the rest of Africa.”

“Privatization: A Loss? No Way” was the sign that greeted Reed at his next stop

of Kigali, Rwanda. In a country torn by ethnic violence and, more recently, natural disaster, a bold revolution in free-market economics is taking shape, Reed discovered in a two-hour interview with Robert Bayigamba, the government's secretary of privatization. Since 1996, Rwanda has been selling off floundering state-owned hotels, chicken hatcheries, paper mills, and even water and electrical utilities.



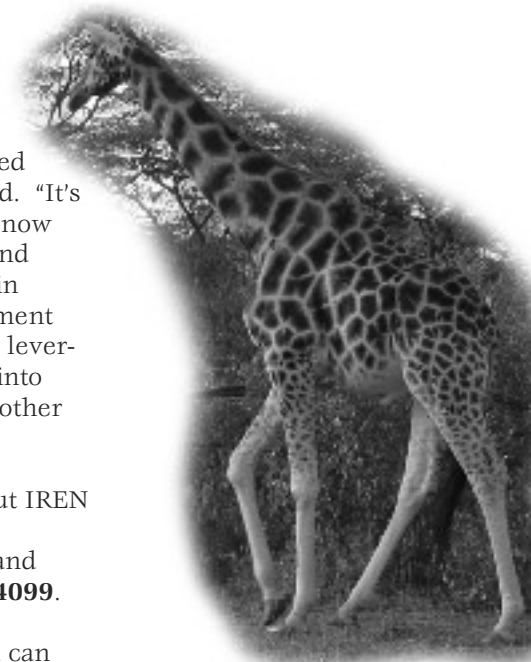
Rwandan safaris to observe some of the only 670 mountain gorillas left in the world are all conducted by private, native-owned, and locally run companies.



Women in business, considered taboo in Rwanda until recently, are flourishing under the country's new spirit of enterprise. The Association of Rwandan Businesswomen strongly supports the government's privatization efforts.

"When freedom blossoms in one country, its cause is strengthened everywhere," says Reed. "It's exciting to see what is now developing in Kenya and Rwanda, and all of us in the free-market movement should look forward to leveraging these successes into important victories in other parts of the world."

More information about IREN is available at www.irenkenya.org and www.mackinac.org/4099. More information on Rwandan privatization can be found at www.mackinac.org/4100!



Rwanda and Kenya photos by Lawrence Reed.

Center-Inspired Legislation Would Hold Unions Accountable

Michigan public-sector employees will have a much better idea of what their unions are doing with their dues dollars if the Michigan Legislature passes, and Gov. Engler signs, a bill inspired by the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's labor policy team.

The bill, introduced in the House Jan. 24, would require public-sector unions operating in Michigan to report their financial dealings to the same extent as businesses and corporations in order to ensure that workers' mandatory dues are spent in ways that those workers approve.

This blow for worker rights is being struck because a Mackinac Center report released in December caught the attention of Rep. Robert



Rep. Gosselin's bill, inspired by a Center report, would apply financial disclosure laws similar to those on the books for corporations since the 1930s to public-sector unions such as the Michigan Education Association, which spends millions of dollars every election cycle to influence political races.

Gosselin, R-Troy, chairman of the House Committee on Employment Relations, Training, and Safety. The report,

authored by Mackinac Center Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter, Labor Research Associate Paul Kersey, and former researcher Shawn Miller, is entitled "The Michigan Union Accountability Act: A Step Toward Accountability and Democracy in Labor Organizations."

Gosselin's legislation would require annual financial reports from unions representing government employees in Michigan. It calls for unions to report their spending in a variety of functional categories, including bargaining, grievances, campaign contributions, and issue advocacy. Annual reports would be audited by independent accountants to assure accuracy. The information would discourage waste and fraud and help workers to assess

their unions' fiscal priorities and financial health.

"Government employees across the state pay more than \$100 million in mandatory union dues each year, yet, as the law stands, they receive no accounting for how their unions spend this money," said Hunter. "Michigan workers who are forced to support a union have a right to know how their money is being spent."

"I commend the Mackinac Center for its hard work and input in bringing this important issue to the attention of Michigan citizens," Gosselin stated.!

Entrepreneur Holman Enlightens Michigan

Scott Holman has always had a flare for entrepreneurial ventures. A native of Ishpeming in the Upper Peninsula, he funded his college education at Northern Michigan University by operating a scuba diving business from 1961 to 1965. Now, as owner, president, and CEO of Bay Cast Technologies, a manufacturing concern located in Bay City, Holman believes he has found the formula for happiness.

"I have tried to lead a balanced life," he says. "That balance is supported by four pillars: family first, philanthropy of both time and money, business and com-



Scott and Martine Holman, pictured here in a December 2001 expedition to Antarctica, chronicle their successful private renovation of a historic Michigan lighthouse on www.graniteisland.com. The Mackinac Center called for the privatization of historic lighthouses in 1996.

merce, as well as community and public policy. I take all of them very seriously and each has contributed to my success and my happiness."

Holman's interest and expertise in the public-policy arena match his knack for business success. As a U.S. Chamber of Commerce official, he has testified before Congress on regulatory and environmental issues. And as a contributor to the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, he has helped the Center produce *Michigan Privatization Report (MPR)*, a quarterly journal read by thousands of state and local officials interested in learning about private-sector solutions to public-policy challenges.

The most recent issue of *MPR* features Holman's own solution to the problem of a neglected lighthouse on Lake Superior's Granite Island. In 1999, he and his wife Martine purchased the island from the federal government for \$86,000 and privately renovated the historic lighthouse, which had fallen into disrepair under government ownership.

Holman's business and personal efforts have won him numerous awards and honors, including the 1998 Blue Chip Enterprise Award from the U.S. Chamber and the 1989 Distinguished Alumni Award from his alma mater, on whose board he serves.!

Strength in Numbers

In December alone, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's Freedom Fund welcomed 58 new members. To us, this is far more than just a number. It represents 58 new partners for advancing sound policy. In light of the traumatic events of 2001 and the economic downturn that took place in their wake, we consider 58 new members to be a resounding expression of support.

These new members—like all our contributors—so value our efforts on behalf of limited government, free markets, and political liberty that they are willing to dig into their discretionary income despite economically difficult times. Their sacrifice helps us not only to meet our budgetary needs, but also



David Aussicker, Vice President for Advancement

to maintain a base of support from every region of Michigan.

Here are just a few examples of what these

members are helping us accomplish:

- **MichiganVotes.org**, our newest web site, enables anyone to find out what bills and amendments are proposed in the Michigan Legislature, their current status, whether they passed, who voted for or against, and also to examine the voting records of

legislators. The web site is the first of its kind anywhere and receives almost 60,000 "hits" per month. Go to the site and tell your representative your opinion: It's free.

- Promoting a **Teachers' Bill of Rights** that would end compulsory unionism for teachers and inform them of their rights.
- Educating Michigan lawmakers on the benefits of a **Right-to-Work law** that would protect the right of workers to abstain from union membership.
- **Paycheck protection** for 41,000 Michigan state employees, requiring unions to obtain written approval from workers

each year before they spend dues money on political or other non-workplace-related activities.

- Joining forces with U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., to protect taxpayers with **Proposal A +**, which would preserve the Proposal A tax structure while adding benefits of a tax credit for education expenses.

Be sure to tell your friends what we're doing for the quality of life in the great state of Michigan—and encourage them to use the enclosed envelope to join the Mackinac Center team!!

In Defense of Outsourcing

by Steven Piraino

A year ago, Harvard students occupied a university building to demand that all Harvard employees be paid a wage that reflects the cost of a decent lifestyle in the city of Cambridge, Mass. The outcome of this six-week charade was a series of committee hearings led by Harvard economist Lawrence Katz. And these hearings have, in turn, produced the "Katz Report." One of the supposedly damning conclusions of this report is that Harvard has been outsourcing its employees to avoid paying above-market wages and benefits.

There is no denying that the argument against outsourcing has a certain amount of appeal when applied to Harvard University, whose \$14 billion endowment has been acquired, at least partially, at taxpayer expense. However, it is quite another thing altogether to believe that outsourcing is, in general, a "deplorable" practice, as a writer for the *Harvard Crimson* recently suggested.

After all, why shouldn't firms outsource? Why shouldn't the worker who is willing to render the best services for the least pay be the one who gets the job? Instinctively, most of us recoil in disgust at the suggestion that wages should reflect nothing more than the cold calculus of supply and demand. Yet few of us realize just how essential this "cold calculus" is for the long-run welfare of laborers themselves.

In a free market, wages reflect the scarcity of those

services that different workers can perform. In other words, suppose Bill is a good computer programmer but an excellent web designer. Which job should Bill take? At first, the answer seems obvious. Bill should design web pages. However, what if good computer programmers are hard to come by, and web designers are a dime a dozen?

In this case, the ruthless forces of supply and demand ensure that the wages of computer programmers are higher than the wages of web designers. As a result, Bill gets the "signal" that taking a job as a web designer would be a waste of his highly valuable computer programming talents.

Or, consider the example of a company deciding which of two applicants, Smith or Jones, to hire as a package deliveryman. Smith is slightly more qualified, but Smith is also qualified to take a more productive job as, say, an airline mechanic. Smith should really become an airline mechanic and leave the package delivery job for Jones, who has a more limited skill set. However, only the free market can ensure that the more urgent need for airline mechanics is reflected in a higher wage.

Both of these examples illustrate how, thanks to the price system, prospective

employers and employees can unknowingly take into account information about scarcities and preferences they could not possibly know any other way. Without honest market determination of wages, this information would simply be lost. Workers would unwittingly accept jobs they were overqualified to hold, and companies would

unwittingly hire individuals who, under a free market, would know their services are more highly valued elsewhere. The poor, of course, would be the greatest losers of all. Without

the right to accept lower wages, they would be deprived of their only competitive advantage over more highly skilled workers.

Though it sounds nice to say that each laborer's compensation should reflect his needs, the implementation of this view would entail losing all of the benefits of the division of labor. Instead of flowing to those jobs that will produce the most valuable goods for consumers, labor would be allocated according to the politicized vagaries of some kind of official bargaining process. Who would gain under this framework? If the experience of Cuba, North Korea, Soviet Russia, and Communist China is any guide, no one.

The fallacy of the outsourcing-is-always-wrong crowd is essentially a fallacy of com-

position. Well-intentioned activists look at a particular business and, correctly, see that its employees would be better off if the company were forced to pay a wage that reflects some benchmark living standard rather than the principles of supply and demand. The resulting misdirection of labor and underemployment, however, means that overall real wages tend to fall, not rise.

What labor activists see as a victory for labor is typically a victory for relatively overpaid, underemployed, union-protected workers over unskilled, unprotected workers and consumers. Nor can these unintended consequences be ameliorated by extending the same "protection" from market forces to labor as a whole. Instead, such a policy would utterly destroy the very market-determined division of labor that accounts for the "first world" nature of our society.

While there are specific, ethical arguments that can be used against the practice of outsourcing at an extremely rich institution like Harvard, these arguments cannot be extended to labor as a whole. Ignorance of this truth explains why some campus activists may have become dupes of the narrow, antisocial interests of union labor. **!**

Steven Piraino is an economics major at Harvard University. This article originally appeared on Mises.org, the web site of the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Ala., and is reprinted with permission.

What labor activists see as a victory for labor is typically a victory for relatively overpaid, underemployed, union-protected workers over unskilled, unprotected workers and consumers.

New Web Feature Links to Mackinac Center Media Coverage

The Mackinac Center for Public Policy's reputation for solid research and knowledgeable experts guarantees that journalists will turn to the Center for dependable background information for their stories on labor reform, taxation, education, privatization, the environment, and other important policy issues. Michigan newspapers and journals referenced Mackinac Center ideas roughly 1,200 times in just the last year and national media are increasingly seeking out Center expertise as well.

In fact, the Mackinac Center is mentioned in the public square so frequently that keeping up with it all has become quite a chore. That's why the Center's communications and information technology teams have launched a new web site feature, "Mackinac Center in the News."



The new feature is updated as news develops with links to newspaper stories that feature quotations from Mackinac Center policy analysts, citations of Center research, or commentaries from Center scholars. Together with the web site's "Current Comment" feature, a daily dose of policy insight frequently linked by

high-profile Internet sites such as the Heritage Foundation's Townhall.com, "Mackinac Center in the News" is a great way to keep up-to-date on the issues affecting Michigan and our nation.

Be sure to check www.mackinac.org frequently for the latest!

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Viewpoint Commentaries

Proposed Legislation a License to Kill Competitors for Big Auto Dealers

January 2002 V2002-01

Far from deterring fraud, legislation to require small-time "curb-side" auto dealers to obtain a state license before they could sell cars would raise barriers to new competitors of larger dealers and restrict consumers' choices.

Should D-DOT Work Weekends?

January 2002 V2002-02

Union contracts that stipulate a strict Monday through Friday work schedule for Detroit Department of Transportation employees ensure city services are less reliable and more expensive.

Consumer, Not Corporate, "Greed" Is Ultimately Behind Layoffs

January 2002 V2002-03

Layoffs attributed to "corporate greed" are ultimately the result of consumers' decisions about which firms to support, or not support, with their business.

Graduation Rates an Imperfect Measure of School Excellence

January 2002 V2002-04

The only sure way to know whether schools are providing a quality education is to introduce more choice and competition into the system, so that schools have incentives to improve.

Gladstone, Michigan: A Little Town with a Big Name

February 2002 V2002-05

The little town of Gladstone, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is named after William Gladstone, a 19th-century British prime minister who was a champion of liberty.

"Teach for America" Success Points the Way to Teacher Certification Reform

February 2002 V2002-06

A new study highlights the good

job that Teach for America, a private teacher program, is doing to place thousands of qualified and talented volunteer teachers in some of the nation's most troubled schools.

Government "Condemnation" Power Makes Property Rights Less Secure

February 2002 V2002-07

Government abuse of its so-called condemnation power has unjustly deprived ordinary citizens of their private property for the benefit of big-league developers.

Good News for the New Year: Americans Living Longer Than Ever

February 2002 V2002-08

Americans are living longer than at any time in history, a powerful testimony to both the vibrancy of nature and the industrial and technological progress fueled by free minds and free markets.

Historic Principles over Government "Historic Districts"

March 2002 V2002-09

When buildings get to be of a certain age, they often take on historic significance. But is it necessary for that significance to overshadow time-honored principles of limited government, individual liberty, and private property rights?

Great Lakes Drilling: Environmental Threat or Phantom Menace?

March 2002 V2002-10

There may be aesthetic reasons to support the Michigan Legislature's recent ban on oil and gas drilling beneath the Great Lakes, but insurance data confirm that the environmental risks are remote.

Free Trade a Sweeter Deal for Everyone

March 2002 V2002-11

Despite more than two centuries of economic scholarship showing that protective tariffs and quotas on imported goods make nations poorer, the United States contin-

ues its policy of sugar protectionism, which costs U.S. consumers nearly \$2 billion every year.

Michigan Public School Teachers Launch a Non-Union Revolution

March 2002 V2002-12

Public schools and their employees don't win many battles against the Michigan Education Association, but recent victories over compulsory unionism in two charter schools could signal a new dynamic in Michigan's public school system.

Journals

Michigan Education Report

MER2002-01 \$3.00

Features include what the new changes in federal education law

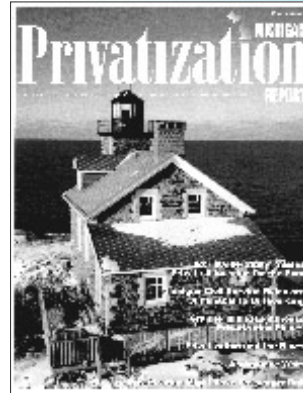


mean for Michigan schools, how teachers at one charter school voted to remove the Michigan Education Association as their bargaining representative, and a former U.S. Department of Education official's solution to the "teacher shortage." 12 pages.

Michigan Privatization Report

MPR2002-01 \$3.00

Features include the successful privatization of a historic Michigan lighthouse, Amtrak privatization, how state laws are friendly to government agencies that want to contract with private-sector businesses, and a new study praising private education providers that are teaching low-income students. 16 pages.

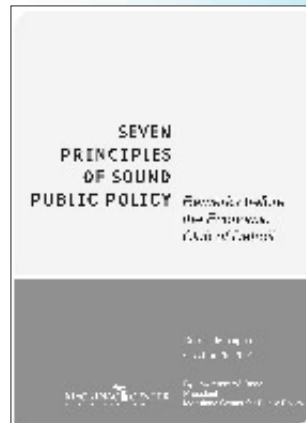


Special

Seven Principles of Sound Public Policy

SP2002-01 \$3.00

Mackinac Center President Lawrence Reed's speech to the Economic Club of Detroit is a



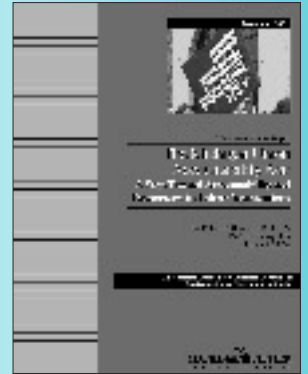
concise "dismal science" guide for policy-makers and an economic primer for students and other citizens. 8 pages.

Reports

The Michigan Union Accountability Act: A Step Toward Account- ability and Democracy in Labor Organizations

S2001-02 \$5.00

Unions in Michigan represent over 900,000 workers and take in more than \$250 million in membership dues annually. But in spite of their expansive wealth and political power, requirements that unions disclose their financial dealings are minimal. Reform of the federal reporting system, which governs private-



sector unions, is needed but unlikely in the current political climate. Michigan can take the lead by passing its own Union Accountability Act, requiring annual financial disclosure reports and independent audits of public-sector union affiliates active in the Great Lakes State. 35 pages.

How to Order

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Labor Team Talks Policy with President Bush, Top Aides

Mackinac Center for Public Policy labor experts were among a select group of 20 policy analysts who visited the White House for a Dec. 12 meeting with President Bush and other top federal officials.

Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter and Labor Research Associate Paul Kersey represented the Center at an event attended by specialists from the nation's most influential state-based think tanks. The highlight of the visit was a half-hour briefing with the president, during which he reviewed the "war on terrorism" and how it affects his domestic agenda.

Earlier in the day Hunter and Kersey met with Senior Advisor to the President Karl Rove, Director of Strategic Initiatives Barry Jackson, and



Director of Labor Policy Robert Hunter snapped this photo of President Bush speaking to attendees of the American Conservative Union's "The Statehouse Meets the White House" program.

Assistant Secretary of Labor Chris Spear. At the meetings, Hunter urged the administration to protect union workers' rights by enforcing the Supreme Court's 1988 *Beck* decision, which mandates that workers not be forced to pay any dues or fees beyond those necessary for

the performance of their union's employee representation duties.

Hunter questioned the wisdom of the administration's decision to enlist Teamster support for its energy plan, fearing that a political tradeoff would delay proper

Beck enforcement. The Wall Street Journal recently published Hunter's comments on current *Beck* enforcement efforts.

Hunter and Kersey also promoted the findings of their new study, "The Michigan Union Accountability Act," which calls for applying financial disclosure laws, similar to those for corporations, to labor organizations (see story on page 7).

"There are a number of things Bush officials can do to improve labor relations and federal protection of worker rights," says Hunter, who served on the National Labor Relations Board under President Reagan. "Our research will help them make the most of the opportunities they have."!

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