

Testimony of Larry Getts
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Mr. Chairman, members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today on the National Labor Relations Board's "Ambush Election" proposal, and allowing me to share my experience with union officials' during their effort to unionize my place of work.

Based on my experience with union organizers, it is clear to me that the rule changes the National Labor Relations Board has proposed would only further the interests of union officials while undermining those of workers.

Let me start by telling you that I am a former union member myself. Currently, I work at a small plant in Fort Wayne, Indiana that is owned by Dana Corp, where we pack and ship auto parts.

When I took the job, I had been told by other employees that there had never been any push to form a union in our plant in anyone's memory.

All that changed in October of 2007 when the United Auto Workers began a "Card Check" organizing drive at our plant.

That fall a UAW official came to the plant explaining that he had cards for us to sign that would unionize our plant, and telling us all the reasons he thought we should sign the cards.

This union official was so brazen as to constantly and without hesitation curse throughout his presentation. This might not sound outrageous to some people, however you must understand that approximately 80% of the workforce at the plant is elderly women -- and they were clearly offended.

Despite this unpleasant beginning, I was initially inclined to support the unionization effort as I'd been a union member at a previous job. As time went by however, I became extremely put off by the general approach of the UAW officials and grew increasingly skeptical of their claims.

In the end, the experience taught me something all too many

workers have learned first hand: Union organizers have an uncanny ability to harass, misinform, mislead and manipulate in pursuit of their goals.

On a daily basis my coworkers and I would find UAW officials waiting in our break room. They'd approach us during our lunch breaks. They would even follow us to our vehicles at the end of the day and some of us even to our homes -- all in order to give us their side of things and inform us of the so-called "benefits" their "representation" would bring.

They would say that they'd start negotiating the moment the cards were signed and that our small shop would make the same as the workers in the other -- much larger -- Fort Wayne plant.

To many of us, that didn't seem plausible because we were making twelve dollars an hour, and in Fort Wayne they were making twenty-one dollars an hour.

Of course, much of what they told us proved to be false, but it's fair to say we weren't lacking information from the union officials.

What neither my coworkers, nor I knew at the time, was that the company was under a so-called "neutrality agreement." This meant that the only information we were allowed to receive, the only side of the story we were told, was that of the UAW.

Honestly, my coworkers and I would have appreciated hearing the views of our employer. After all, this was an important decision. In order to make a decision that would be right for ourselves and our families, we needed all the information we could get.

Because we weren't hearing any opposing points of view from our employer, I took it upon myself to research and verify everything I could.

The period of harassment my coworkers and I endured at the hands of UAW officials was intolerable. But, under the proposed rules, we would have been subjected to even more intimidation, harassment and mistruths.

You see, if these rules go into effect, union officials would have access to workers' personal information. They'd have not only our names and home addresses, but personal email addresses and home telephone numbers as well.

As it was, combating the falsehoods of UAW officials would have been a nearly insurmountable task, had it not been for the help I found through the National Right to Work Foundation's website.

My coworkers and I were ultimately able to reject the unwanted "representation" of the UAW. We came to that decision after we had the benefit of looking at all the facts -- and only because we were afforded the time to do so.

If the NLRB's recommendations for union elections go into effect, even workers who enjoy the benefit of hearing both points of view would be denied the ability to fully research the information needed to make the decision that's best for them.

In reality, under these rules, the additional burden on already busy workers will prohibit them from making an informed decision -- especially where there is an absence of information from employers, as was the case in my experience.

These rule changes are aimed at furthering the interests of Big Labor at the expense of workers' ability to make a fully informed decision on an important matter.

They are intended only to make it easier for union officials to harass and force workers like myself into joining their union, into paying dues and increasing the union bosses' power.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the Committee, the fact is the National Labor Relations Board has gone far beyond its authority in serving Big Labor's agenda. Congress must stop this runaway NLRB and its assaults on workers and businesses in this country.