

The hypocrisy of government protected organized labor

It shames me to think that it took this latest strike, the strike by the Northwest Airlines mechanics, to finally make me disgusted enough to bring up some points about organized labor. In actuality, it's really one big point composed of a few smaller points. The big picture about organized labor, as it's currently protected by the government, is that it is extremely hypocritical.

One of the issues that makes organized labor hypocritical is probably the reason most touted for its existence: workers rights. As someone who works for Air Wisconsin Airlines Corporation, I'm FORCED to join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, and have \$30 stolen from my paycheck a month, despite the fact I have no interest in being part of the union. Of course I can't negotiate my own salary. So much for workers rights - and the incentive to excel.

However, it's not even just the issue of workers rights. What about the rights of business owners, be it a few guys, or hundreds of shareholders, to decide how they operate their business? The worker does indeed have rights. Those to negotiate their own salaries, benefits, and other conditions of employment. In the event they are not under a contract, and don't like how conditions are, they have the right to leave. Whether anyone wants to admit it or not (well, I guess I just did), employees are a resource. They should be able to directly negotiate their terms of employment without interference from third parties, and if nothing works out for them, they don't have to work. Therefore, unless it is agreed upon that an employee is to have a controlling interest in the business, they have no say in how it is to be run. Sounds pretty simple, and sensible to me, wouldn't you think?

Someone who has not been tarnished by the butchered present day version of the word "rights" might ask "Well Jason, why would the company even deal with a union and those trying to start one? Couldn't they just ignore the union and any demands they make?" Indeed, this is a very logical question. Unfortunately, the answer is illogical, and another reason that makes organized labor hypocritical. 29 U.S.C. §§ 158 pretty much states that an employer MUST bargain with the elected representatives of employees. I find something inherently wrong with the fact that the government is allowed to force a party to "bargain" with another party. I use the term bargain loosely however, I consider it more along the lines of wasting time until the union is happy.

The hypocrisy of the issue discussed in the last paragraph lies within the government itself. Section 2 of the Sherman Act, the key antitrust law that's been used to go after Microsoft, says "Every person who shall monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire with any other person or persons, to monopolize any part of the trade or commerce among the several States, or with foreign nations, shall be deemed guilty of a felony..." It seems as though the forceful nullification of rights of the business, and the government endorsed protosource for extortion given to labor organizations, would indeed violate section 2 of the Sherman Act. I don't remember Microsoft forcing anyone to buy the products that made it rise to the top.

So the next time you look at the news and see a story about a union on strike, remember the hypocrisy involved in preventing a business from being a business and firing people for walking around with signs, and not working like the business hired them to do. After all, a person can get fired for taking too many sick days or showing up late too many times, so why should they not be able to get fired for blatantly not showing up to work?