

## **Union statement is unfair**

Feb 21, 2006 - 07:30:18 am PST

In "Initiative targets union dues" (Feb. 9 Daily News), a Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) union official took a potshot at the National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation, characterizing it as "anti-union -- not pro-worker." In addition to printing this false statement, the paper did not even contact the foundation for a response.

Since 1968, the foundation has provided free legal aid to hundreds of thousands of employees who have been victimized by compulsory unionism abuses --- from arbitration hearings all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court. Moreover, the foundation's core mission is to promote voluntary unionism, and it lays claim to numerous landmark legal victories for workers' rights --- including the very rights that WFSE officials are apparently violating today.

In fact, our organization has been contacted by numerous state employees who WFSE officials have fired for refusal to pay union dues, including dues spent for politics.

Under the circumstances, it is clear that it is actually the union brass who is acting against the interest of workers, not the foundation. Perhaps WFSE officials should take a hard look in the mirror.

**Patrick Ashby**

National Right to Work Legal Defense Foundation

Washington, D.C.

## **Those who benefit should pay**

Feb 27, 2006 - 07:35:48 am PST

If Patrick Ashby ("Union statement is unfair," Feb. 21 letter) wishes to twist my quote in a part of an earlier story to mean that his organization is "anti-union" and "not pro-worker," that characterization is his, not mine. This is a case of "If the shoe doesn't fit, why try to wear it?"

Ashby should read The Daily News -- and WFSE's contracts -- more carefully before he makes these kinds of accusations.

At issue here is whether it is fair to expect some employees to pay all the costs of negotiating and enforcing a contract while others pay nothing toward the benefits they receive. For decades, police officers, firefighters, teachers, airplane machinists and countless other public employees and private-industry workers in this state have resoundingly said that everyone who benefits from a strong contract should pay some fair share toward those benefits.

WFSE's 33,000 dues-paying members ask nothing more and nothing less in the contracts they've negotiated.

**Tim Welch, director of public affairs**

The Washington Federation of State Employees

Olympia, Wash.