

National Right to Work
Foundation Press Conference
Wednesday, March 15, 2006
Olympia, WA

Statement of Pat Woodward

My name is Pat Woodward. On December 9th I was fired from my job at the Washington State Department of Licensing. I've worked for the state of Washington for over 21 years.

I was not fired because of my work or conduct; I always exceeded expectations in my evaluations. I was terminated simply for not giving my money to a union that I disagree with and that I don't believe represents me.

To me, being forced to join and support a union seems un-American.

My coworkers and I were told by our payroll supervisor that no one would be required to join the union. And since it seems reasonable that everyone should be able to choose for themselves if they want to support a union or not, I saw no reason to question what we were told.

Then I received a letter saying that because I refused to sign a form authorizing the union to automatically take a portion of my paycheck, I would be fired because the contract the union had negotiated said I had to pay the union to keep my job. All this from a union that I never wished to belong to!

The union had conducted a biased and unfair vote to enter that clause into the contract, and the so-called "vote" they held was more like something you would expect to find in a third world dictatorship than a free country like the United States.

Union officials made sure that the union members who would support the forced dues clause in the contract were informed and came to vote, while those of us who weren't members were given bad information if we were informed at all. And employees, who did vote, had to go to the union hall where union officials could look over your shoulder to see how you voted.

I am here as part of this lawsuit today not just because I have been unfairly fired because of a union that is more interested in collecting workers' money than actually representing employees, but because I believe that my former co-workers, and all state employees, deserve better than to have to choose between losing their jobs and being forced to pay tribute to a union that so many feel does not represent them.