



The Center on National Labor Policy, Inc.

5211 Port Royal Road, Suite 103
North Springfield, VA 22151
(703) 321-9180

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NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Michael Avakian

UNION OFFICERS PLEA GUILTY TO HOBBS ACT EXTORTION CONSPIRACY

Washington, D.C.—Both the President and former Business Agent of Iron Workers Local 395, Portage, Indiana, pled guilty in federal district court for commission of conspiracy to engage in criminal extortion through threats and violence to obtain union contracts from two employers in violation of the Hobbs Act. Following a 2016 civil complaint for assault and battery against them and Local 395 supported by the Center on National Labor Policy, Inc., the union officers were indicted by the Department of Justice in 2018. Their Plea Agreements were filed with the United States District Court for the Northern District of Indiana on January 22, 2020.

D5's EMPLOYEES ATTACKED FOR REJECTING UNION REPRESENTATION

D5 Iron Works, an Illinois corporation, employed six workers on a school construction project for the Dyer Baptist Church, in Dyer, Indiana. No employees requested union representation.

On January 7, 2016, Union President Jeffrey Veach and Business Agent Thomas Williamson demanded D5's owner sign a union contract and hire only its members; free choice was not an option. D5's owner refused the demand. Announcing to D5 they would take the matter “old school,” the two union officers gathered up union members and led a coordinated a violent mid-afternoon assault on D5's owner and its employees at the school. The attack occurred when parents were picking up their children after school.

Local 395 disputes the incident and its involvement in the civil case. President Veach and Business Agent Williamson refused to testify during discovery in the civil case. Yesterday, Veach and Williamson's Plea Agreements admit their complicity and the purpose of the attack.

Local 395 Business Agent Thomas Williamson's Plea Agreement, states:

On January 7, 2016, within the Northern District of Indiana, I knowingly and intentionally agreed and conspired with my co-defendant, Jeffrey Veach, and others, to use actual and threatened violence to obtain contracts for the union in which I served as an officer, Ironworkers Local 395....When the owner of D5 refused, I became angry, calling him a “cunt” and a “scab bastard” and grabbing

his jacket. I also said that we were going to have to “take things back to old school.” By “old school,” I meant committing acts of violence against D5 and its workers.... Veach and I then gathered up rank-and-file members of Local 395 to return to the jobsite that afternoon. Local 395 members attacked the D5 workers and beat them with fists and loose pieces of hardwood, kicking them while they were on the ground. As a result of the attack, one D5 worker sustained serious bodily injury in the form of a broken jaw, that required several surgeries, extended hospitalization, and medical treatment.

D5 and its employees’ civil suit seeks justice and restitution. As part of the Plea Agreements, Veach and Williamson agree to make 100% restitution to D5 and its injured workers, accept prison terms of 2 to 4.5 years, plus three years of supervision. They agree to resign their union affiliation. Their convictions bar them from participation in union matters for 13 years under federal law.

The civil complaint also charges violation of the Labor Act. [29 U.S.C. §158(b)(4)], Indiana’s Right to Work law, and seeks damages for pain and suffering, injunctive relief and punitive damages.

MCMAHON DEPLORES UNION BOSS TACTICS

Center on National Labor Policy Chairman Brett McMahon commented, “The Iron Workers made a mockery of worker free choice. These employees were beaten without any opportunity to register their desires. The criminal pleas send a powerful message to union officials nationwide and to their supporters who think America’s workers have one choice --union exclusive representation.”

“In this case, they never chose union exclusive representation in the first place. Management did the right thing and refused to make that decision for them.”

“The First Amendment stands for free and individual choice. The Department of Justice investigated, indicted, and prosecuted the reprehensible acts. Without this scrutiny the term ‘free choice’ in the workplace would be meaningless.”

The Center on National Labor Policy is a non-profit, nonpartisan charitable legal foundation that works through the courts to restore individual rights lost through abuse of union power.

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