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In opposition to HB 5433 and SB 352

My name is Stephen Mendelsohn, I am an adult on the autism spectrum, and I have been working closely with Cathy Ludlum and others against the forced unionization of personal care attendants since the issue was first raised in 2009. I vigorously oppose both HB 5433, An Act Creating a Procedure for Personal Care Attendants to Collectively Bargain with the State, and SB 352, An Act Creating a Process for Family Child Care Providers to Collectively Bargain with the State. Since January 2011, I have coordinated the Facebook page, Stop the SEIU from Hijacking Care Providers in Connecticut <https://www.facebook.com/groups/185712171462620/> in opposition to these forced unionizations.

I have my own experience being hired for a job in the middle of a union organizing drive. After being laid off from my first job in 1985, the State Department of Labor referred me to Hood Milk in Newington, where I was hired to do work I was not really physically matched for. I worked there for just two weeks, but I remember well being lobbied by both sides on whether or not to vote for the union, which I assume was the UFCW. I remember management calling us in to give us their side of the issue, and I remember receiving leaflets from union organizers on the other side. Roughly speaking, it was a fair fight, both sides pushed the envelope a bit on tactics, and everyone at the plant knew a union election was going to occur.

What we are dealing here with these bills seeking to codify Governor Malloy's unconstitutional Executive Orders 9 & 10 is a completely rigged game in favor of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). When the union vote for childcare providers took place back in December, many never knew a union election was taking place, or even that there was a union organizing drive. Some who were eligible never received a ballot; others who did threw it away as junk mail. Why was a union targeting independent businesswomen? These daycare providers only found out about the fact that they were being shanghaied into SEIU after Hollee Saville, a childcare provider from Minnesota I friended on Facebook, who is also a plaintiff in a lawsuit against Governor Mark Dayton on this issue, e-mailed me a link of Connecticut daycare provider associations. Cathy and her friends and PCAs started calling the list, and Debbie Barisano hit pay dirt reaching the folks in Southington. In the last dozen weeks, the backlash against stealth unionization has mushroomed.

This same process is now being repeated in the SEIU's current blitzkrieg drive to unionize PCAs before another backlash mushrooms. Already, PCAs in Connecticut are reporting SEIU organizers pestering them in their homes, refusing to leave them alone

until they sign the union authorization cards. We who oppose SEIU's scheme are better than that, and we refuse to violate the privacy of PCAs. It will only get worse if and when the ballots go out. In 2009, Fresno California home care workers sought to leave SEIU for the rival National Union of Healthcare Workers (NUHW). When the ballots went out, SEIU organizers intimidated home care workers at their homes, threatened Latino workers with deportation, opened their mail, and marked and altered workers' ballots. Local immigrant and disability advocates joined with these workers to protest SEIU's outrageous behavior. The SEIU's second-in-command, Dave Regan, is shown on YouTube calling for SEIU organizers to give NUHW "an old-school ass-whipping" and "a butt-whipping they will never forget."

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vg06CC1vkX8> Fresno disability self-advocate John Wilkins said at the time, "These tactics don't just hurt homecare providers, they hurt people like myself who rely on them. As a consumer, **there is nothing I dislike more than bullying and intimidation.** There is simply no place for it in any healthcare setting. (emphasis added)" <http://www.nuhw.org/media/2009/11/24/immigrant-and-disability-advocates-protest-seiu-voter-intimi.html>

Bullying and intimidation. Again, as an autistic adult, I am particularly vulnerable to bullying and intimidation, and often have had difficulty fighting back against bullies, and I dislike bullying every bit as much as Mr. Wilkins. Children are now taught to speak out and report bullies and not to aid and abet them. We have seen way too many cases of teens committing suicide after being bullied because of their disability, sexual orientation, or some other difference. Appeasing bullies only leads to more bullying. In this case, the SEIU Purple Army is the bully, aided and abetted by our Governor and leaders of his administration. Today you have a choice. You can aid and abet the SEIU bullies by supporting these bills, or you can stand up for what is right and just say NO! Stand with our united and diverse coalition of people with disabilities, personal care attendants, their counterparts employed under the DDS waivers, relatives caring for those with developmental disabilities, family childcare providers, and concerned citizens from across the political spectrum in stopping the SEIU from claiming to "represent" us against our will and seizing our paychecks or subsidy payments.

Because if we allow this to pass, the SEIU bullies won't be content unionizing just these two groups. They will go after the larger daycare centers, doctors who receive Medicaid and HUSKY payments, lawyers who receive government funds to represent indigent clients, landlords who take clients on Section 8, and grocers who accept EBT—anyone who is remotely connected to a government check. At the last meeting of the PCA Workforce Council (meeting under Executive Order 10), SEIU Connecticut State Council Director Paul Filson is quoted as saying, "...the idea is to increase membership—the union does get dues from the increased membership..." and "...by having more members we have more power in the state and the bigger the union is, the more power that we have..." He also said that SEIU was "a fairly militant union." It shows this is about more power for the SEIU bullies and they really do not care about the welfare of their members or agency-fee payers.

In 1937, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, a strong supporter of private sector unions, opposed unions for government employees, saying, "... militant tactics have no place in the functions of any organization of Government employees." Militant tactics definitely have no place in the homes of people with severe disabilities. Militant tactics have no place when daycare providers are required by law to be looking after tired and hungry children and a union organizer shows up saying, "SIGN THIS! SIGN THIS! I will only leave if you sign this card!"

Do not reward the SEIU bullies. They do not even seem to treat their own union organizers very well. Three years ago, Melissa Pinnick, who is leading the drive to unionize Connecticut PCAs, took up her bullhorn and picketed her own union, SEIU, accusing them of unfair labor practices, race and age discrimination, and shouted, "How do you spell hypocrisy? S-E-I-U!" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwsVnbLruwI> If SEIU's own organizers cannot trust their own union, why should people with disabilities, PCAs, daycare providers, legislators, or anyone else do so? Why should any rational person drink this toxic purple Kool-Aid?

Please stop these bills dead in their tracks and work with us to overturn Governor Malloy's Executive Orders 9 and 10. Don't Mourn—Organize Against the SEIU. We Shall Overcome!