

The Business Advocate

Labor-Violence Victims To Relate Grim Tales

A U.S. Chamber of Commerce Publication

October 24, 1983

ACTION

By Harry Bacas

Victims of labor-union violence will tell stories of bombings, arson, physical assaults and property destruction to the Senate Judiciary Committee this week.

The one-day hearing Oct. 25 will demonstrate "the inadequacy of local law enforcement in these cases," said a committee aide.

"With its grim examples of personal property damage and human suffering, this hearing should prove a valuable learning experience for Congress," said Arthur F. Rosenfeld, a labor-law attorney at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

The Judiciary Committee is considering a bill that would apply federal criminal law to union violence. Introduced by Sen. Charles E. Grassley (R-Iowa), the legislation would amend the Hobbs Anti-Extortion Act to include acts committed during labor disputes.

The act has not been used in such cases since a 1973 Supreme Court decision said it did not apply to violence committed in pursuit of legitimate union bargaining aims.

The Judiciary Subcommittee on Separation of Powers, chaired by Sen. John P. East (R-N.C.), has approved the amendment, but it has been stalled in the full committee. Proponents blame pressure

"The firm, which employed 20 persons, could not get deliveries of materials because of union threats..."

from organized labor for the delay. Witnesses from eight states are expected to testify at the hearing, said Terry Campo, counsel to the Judiciary Subcommittee on Administrative Practice and Procedure, which Grassley heads.

Among them are the president of a non-union Lancaster, Pa., construction company who required brain surgery for injuries suffered during a strike by building and construction trade unions.

The U.S. Chamber supports the Grassley bill to amend the Hobbs Anti-Extortion Act, but the Senate Judiciary Committee must approve the legislation for it to advance. Your phone call or letter will help. Write or call the committee chairman, Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.).



Cher Mungovan, who was run out of the construction business with her husband, Walter, when the two refused to sign a union contract, will be the lead witness at a Senate hearing on a bill to amend the Hobbs Act.

Another witness is a former Oregon lumberjack who will tell of union orders to destroy \$100,000 worth of equipment during a labor dispute.

The lead witness will be Cher Mungovan, who with her husband, Walter, were run out of the construction business in Maui, Hawaii, when they refused to sign a contract demanded by union agents.

The firm, which employed 20 persons, could not get deliveries of materials from suppliers because of union threats, it is charged. Two agents of AFL-CIO Carpenters Local 745 have been sentenced to prison terms in connection with the case, and two others have been indicted.

The CNLP says the case demonstrates the absence of any means to protect individuals.

Walter Mungovan, who was the key witness for the prosecution, is still in government custody under the U.S. Federal Witness Protection Program because of fears for his safety.

The Mungovans have exhausted their savings and are accepting contributions to a legal defense fund.

The Center on National Labor Policy, which is representing Walter Mungovan in a suit against the union, said the Mungovan case "is a pointed example of the virtual absence of an any effective means to protect individuals and small businesses from union-sponsored extortion."

The U.S. Chamber has backed the amendment to the Hobbs Act as a means "to curtail violence and threats of violence during labor disputes."

In a letter to the committee, the Chamber said such acts "have no proper role in legitimate labor negotiations."

For more information, call Arthur Rosenfeld at (202) 463-5517.