

**Testimony submitted by**

**Laureen A. Cummings  
Owner, Lorimar Home Care and Staffing Services**

**Before the House Labor Relations Committee  
on Tuesday, August 16, 2011**

**In Support of Pennsylvania Open Workforce Initiative  
H.B. 50, 51, 52, and 53**

My name is Laureen A. Cummings. I am the owner of Lorimar Home Care and Staffing Services. I am also the Founder and Organizer of the Scranton Tea Party in Lackawanna County. Since becoming involved in the TEA Party in February of 2007, I have received numerous calls from various members of our community. Calls that voice many concerns and fears that people are facing on a daily basis. One call sticks in my mind and I always try to share it at every tea party rally regarding the effects unions have had on everyday citizens.'

After my second tea party rally in Scranton, I received a call from a woman who told me she wanted to attend the rally but was afraid to do so. At the time, the media was reporting that we were "Astroturf", "terrorists," "angry mobs," etc. etc. Kind of like they are still doing today!

Anyway, I said to her, please don't listen to the media reports. We are very peaceful and our rallies are educational. There is no violence or angry protests. She interrupted me and said, "No, that isn't what I mean". I said, "oh?" Well then what are you afraid of?" She said "Well, my husband cannot come, and I am afraid because he might lose his job." I asked her why she would think that way.

She went on to tell me that, when her and her husband first moved here, he went to a local politician and asked the man to help him find a job. Of course he was happy to help and said that if her husband was willing to volunteer to help in the upcoming elections, he would be sure to see what he could do for him. So her husband did everything he could to help, including changing his registration from republican to democrat; although, he thought it was an odd request, he did as he was asked.

After that, her husband was hired by a local company that was unionized. From that point forward, he thought that was the end to their requests. He soon found out that wasn't the case. He was not only asked to help out, but basically told by other workers, if he didn't donate the "traditional" fifty dollars to the Democratic Party, it would not "look good". So he complied. But that wasn't even enough; he now is told to put signs in his yard, and he is expected to help during the campaigns.

As I sat and listened to this women's story, I could hear the tremble in her

voice and the heartbreak she was feeling. However, it didn't end there. It ended with her explaining to me that it has gotten so bad that recently her husband came home from work, sat at the kitchen table, put his head in his hands and sobbed to her because he felt so helpless and trapped in his job. She began to cry and said to me "he looked at me and said "what am I supposed to do? I can't lose my job. But how is it that I can't support the people I want to, I can't refuse to help someone I would never vote for, and I can't say what I feel about it."

As upset as I was to hear her story, I tried to console her, then I made a promise to her. I promised this woman I would make sure I told her story so she wouldn't have to. I promised this woman I would make sure I was her voice and her husband's voice so that they would not have to fear the wrath of the union, the politicians, or the fear of him losing his job.

I stand here today to speak for this woman, her husband, and the countless others that have called me ever since. You see, I didn't just hear from this one woman, I heard from many women AND MEN. There are stories of threats to families such as their children not being allowed to participate in sports, extra-curricular activities....down to threats against school board members and their children, if they didn't vote a certain way.

I stand here today to represent the voices of many who are too afraid to speak out and tell you what is happening to them, your friends family and neighbors throughout our community.

I ask you, is this the future you had in mind for your children? Is this your idea of what a Union is supposed to represent?

Do you ever want YOUR son or daughter to be telling you this same story in years to come?

I say NO! And, I say it is time for us ALL to stand up and be the voice of this woman and others like her so that NO MAN or NO WOMAN will EVER have to feel like a slave to a union, an employer, or a politician ever again!

I ask you to stand with us today representing those that are too afraid to

Speak and be THEIR VOICE!

I ask you today to support Pennsylvania Right to Work so that YOUR SONS and YOUR DAUGHTERS will NEVER have to be beholden to an out-of-control union.

It is time to break the chains that are keeping our men and women from voicing their God-given right to say NO to unions! A RIGHT that has been taken away from them. It is time to RESTORE OUR REPUBLIC and this is a great place to start.

Thank you for listening, God Bless you and may God continue to Bless America!

I want to thank this Committee for giving me the opportunity to Speak on House Bill 50/51/52/53. I consider it an honor and a privilege. My name is Laureen A. Cummings. I am the owner and operator of Lorimar Home Care and Staffing Services, Inc. As a nurse and small business owner in the healthcare industry, I can say that I enjoy the flexibility to adjust my staffing levels to meet the needs of my clients - not the demands of a union. My employees also know that I can only direct them while they are on the clock. What they do on their own time is their business.

I owe a debt of gratitude for this privilege to the efforts of Vicki Hoak, Executive Director of The Pennsylvania Homecare Association (PHA) and the Coalition for R.E.A.L. Home and Community-Based Services. Both of whom not only challenged, but defeated Governor Rendell's plans to force consumer-directed homecare workers to unionize by Executive Order.

You should also be aware that I am the Founder and Organizer of the Scranton Tea Party in Lackawanna County. In that capacity, I have been able to speak with many Pennsylvanians about their concerns of the day and for their future. I get daily calls from regular folks, just like me, about their problems, and the fears they face on a daily basis. Many Pennsylvanians are hurting and they have nowhere to turn and no one to listen to them. TEA Party groups across this Great Country have filled that void and given regular folks a voice. A voice that I am humbled and honored to represent today.

One call in particular sticks in my mind. It is one that I always try to share at every Tea Party rally. It is about the effect unions have had on every day citizens. After my second tea party rally in Scranton, I received a call from a woman who told me she wanted to attend - but was afraid to. At the time, the media was reporting that TEA parties were "Astroturf", "terrorists" and "angry mobs". Kind of like they are still doing today!

I asked her not to listen to the media reports. I assured her that we are very peaceful and our rallies are educational. There is no violence or angry protests. She interrupted me and said "no, that isn't what I mean." I then asked her what she was afraid of. She said, "Well my husband can not come and I am afraid because he might lose his job." I asked her why she would think that way. She told me that when she and her husband first moved here, he went to a local politician and asked him to help him find a job. The staff at the office was happy to help and said that, if the gentleman were willing to volunteer to help in the upcoming elections, he would be sure to see what he could do for him. So her husband did everything he could to help him, including changing his registration from Republican to Democrat. Which he thought was an odd request, but he did it anyway.

After that, her husband was hired with a local company that was Union shop. From that point forward he figured he was done. But he soon found out that wasn't the case. He was not only asked to help out, but basically told by other workers, if he didn't donate the "traditional" fifty dollars to the Democratic Party, it would not "look good". So he complied. But that wasn't even enough, he now is told to put signs in his yard and is expected to help during the campaigns.

As I sat and listened to this women's story, I could hear the tremble in her voice and the heartbreak she was feeling. But it didn't end here. She told me that it has gotten so bad that

recently her husband came home from work, sat at the kitchen table, put his head in his hands and sobbed to her because he felt so helpless and trapped in his job. She began to cry and said to me “ he looked at me and said “what am I suppose to do? I can’t lose my job. But how is it that I can’t support the people I want to, I can’t refuse to help someone I would never vote for and I can’t say what I feel about it.”

As upset as I was to hear her story, I tried to console her and then I made a promise to her. I promised this woman that I would tell her story so she wouldn’t have to. I promised this woman that I would be her voice and her husband’s voice so that they would not have to fear the wrath of the union, the politicians or the fear of him losing his job. That is why I am so proud, grateful and humbled to be here today. I have been given the ability to keep my promise to this woman and I am providing a voice to those who cannot speak for themselves. Not out of inability, but out of fear. And, that is who the Tea Party represents and fights for on a daily basis, every day average Americans.

You see, I am here today to speak not just for this woman and her husband, but for the countless others that have called me ever since. I didn’t just hear from this one woman, I heard from many women and men. I heard the stories of threats to families; from their children not being allowed to participate in sports, extra- curricular activities .....right down to threats against school board members and their children if they didn’t vote a certain way. I am here today to represent the voices of many who are too afraid to speak out and tell you what is happening in our communities. I am here to tell their stories about the strong arm tactics of the union leaders and the intimidation by their members.

There was a time when unions were needed for worker safety and fair wages. Now they only serve to protect the Democrat Political Machine while denying workers of their constitutional rights while simultaneously milking the taxpayers. Do you ever want your son or daughter to be telling you this same story in years to come?

I say it is time for us all to stand up and be the voice of this woman, and others like her, so that no man or woman will ever have to feel like a slave to a union , an employer or a politician ever again!

I ask you today to support Right to Work in Pennsylvania so that your sons and daughters will never have to be beholden to the demands and intimidation of a union.

Thank you for allowing me to speak on this critical issue.

Laureen A. Cummings  
CEO - Lorimar Home Care & Staffing Services, Inc.  
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