[A CLOSER LOOK]

They're coming after us

That's no surprise. We knew they would. And though they don't stand a chance, that won't stop them from trying. Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June that public sector unions cannot collect fair share fees, a slew of anti-labor organizations, supported by wealthy special interests, have been working to dismantle union membership nationwide.

Right here in the Empire State, a group calling itself New Choice NY is targeting public employees via multiple communication platforms in an effort to convince them to bolt from their unions.

Meanwhile, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy — a Michiganbased conservative think tank long funded by the family of U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos — has launched a whopping \$10 million campaign aimed at persuading public sector union members to disaffiliate.

And, the so-called Freedom Foundation — a hard-right group bankrolled by the billionaire rightwing activist Koch brothers — have deployed their foot soldiers to laborfriendly states like California and Oregon to persuade workers to drop their unions.

Beware. They will call themselves non-partisan and impartial, and claim they just want to provide "accurate information" about your rights. The truth is, they want to further fatten their wallets by diminishing your rights on the job.

Strong unions mean higher pay, better benefits and improved working conditions. Of course, you already know that — and that's exactly why they are trying to destroy us.

At right are just some of the players aiming to weaken your employment rights, dismantle your benefits and diminish your retirement security. Don't let them.

Refuse to be hoodwinked. In fact, just ignore them. Delete their emails. Hang up if they call. Inform your local president. And tell those union-busters they aren't welcome here.

Recommit. Take a stand by joining or re-enrolling in our union.

Re-engage with your local. Union membership is an active proposition. Get involved. Attend union events. Take action. And, perhaps most importantly, make your voice heard: Vote in everything from your local school board race to state, local and federal elections.

Strong unions ensure higher compensation for their members than non-union employees, as well as collective bargaining rights, legal representation when needed, good health coverage and a secure retirement.

This is our moment.

We must stand together to protect our voice, our values and our union.

BETSY DEVOS

U.S. Education Secretary DeVos and her family have contributed at least \$325,000 to the Mackinac Center. Her husband, Dick DeVos, sat on its board. President of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, which emailed teachers nationwide immediately following the Janus decision, urging workers to drop their union membership.

JOSEPH G. LEHMAN

10.20

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REBEKA

MERCER

The Mercers are the moneyed interests behind

Reclaim New York, founded by Trump insiders

Steve Bannon and Kellyanne Conway. Reclaim

NY has attacked education spending and has

sued a number of school districts.

ROBER

r union membership.

ILLUSTRATIONS: MARK JOSEPH SHARER

[A CLOSER LOOK]

DAVIC

Anonymous dark money billionaire donors

CHARLES

The Koch brothers are a major funder of the Freedom Foundation, which deployed 80 paid canvassers to visit union members in their homes and get them to turn against their unions. Their Americans for Prosperity Foundation is paying for anti-union ads and promoting the Mackinac Center's efforts. They also gave \$250,000 to the anti-union Center for Union Facts.

KOCH

A roster of billionaires have created or donated to secret, shadowy front groups and non-profits — all with the common goal of weakening unions and taking away workers' rights. Many of these groups fail to disclose their donors.

ROBERT BELLAFIORE

A former Pataki aide and chair of the SUNY Charter School Institute, Bellafiore was the public face of a failed effort to bring voucher-like education tax credits to New York. His New Choice NY group is using Mackinac's professional call center but refuses to disclose the donors behind its operations. Leads New York's Empire Center for Public Policy, with Tim Hoefer as executive director. The center has been seeking teachers' email addresses from districts using FOIL requests. Hoefer reportedly sits on the New Choice NY board.

Ε.J.

MCMAHOI