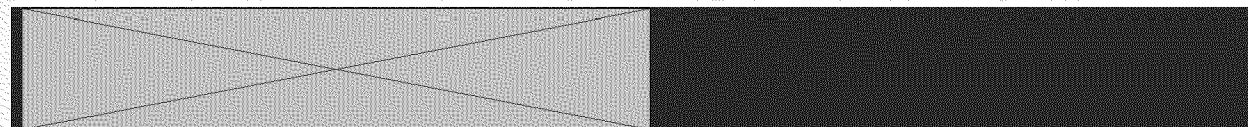


To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: The Washington Post
Sent: Wed 9/20/2017 4:00:25 PM
Subject: Federal Insider: Induction of union-busting Reagan into Labor's Hall of Honor shocks union



Induction of union-busting Reagan into Labor's Hall of Honor shocks union

By Joe Davidson

Before serving as president of the United States, actor Ronald Reagan was president of the Screen Actors Guild. (AP)

Isn't it weird that someone who could contend for the title of America's Greatest Union Buster will be inducted into the Labor Department's Hall of Honor?

More than strange, the union representing Labor Department employees says honoring former president Ronald Reagan is shocking.

But Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta thinks inducting Reagan is a fine idea. So does the Sergeants Benevolent Association of New York City, a union that nominated him. No date for the induction has been announced.

"Well before he led this nation, Ronald Reagan led the Screen Actors Guild during its first three strikes," Acosta said when he announced the planned induction during remarks at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., last month. "As President of the Screen Actors Guild, President Reagan negotiated never-before-seen concessions for SAG members, which included residual payments and health and pension benefits. As President of this nation, Ronald Reagan continued to recognize the contributions of unions to a free society. His support for Solidarity in Poland prompted a flourishing of freedom that ultimately led to the collapse of Communism."

Curiously — or not — Acosta's statement didn't mention Reagan's role in busting the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO). In 1981, he fired more than 11,300 air traffic controllers when they did not end an illegal strike. PATCO then was decertified by the Federal Labor Relations Authority. When it comes to labor organizations, Reagan's presidential actions overshadow his tenure with the Screen Actors Guild, which has its

own controversy.

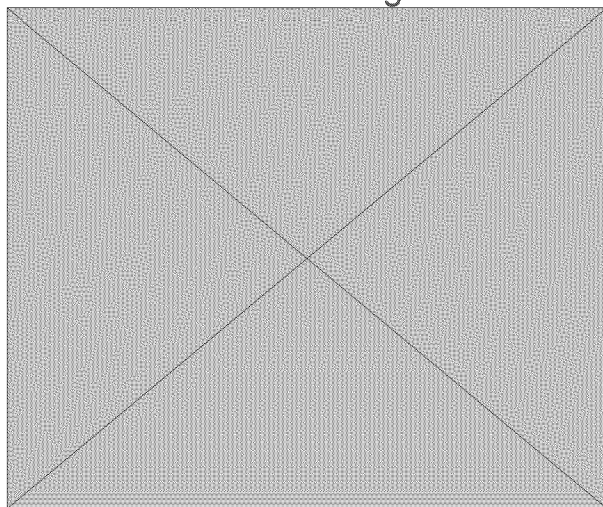
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Oddly, officials of PATCO's successor, the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, had no comment on the induction. But Alex Bastani, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 12 at the Labor Department, expressed his union's "shock and disappointment" in a letter to Acosta, urging him to reconsider. Bastani called Reagan's PATCO firings a "cruel act of industrial violence."

In a bit of hyperbole, however, Bastani didn't help his argument by claiming the firings "created the enormous division of rich and poor at third world levels, which is the root cause of the racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia that paralyzes our nation to this very day."

Those -isms and phobias were around long before Reagan, but Bastani made a good point when he said the "temple honoring the work of men and women who sacrificed themselves to create an American middle class and who championed the causes of America's the working poor, is not the appropriate arena for Ronald Reagan."



Speaking of communism, Bastani also noted Reagan's connection, as a union president, to one of the shameful episodes in recent American political history: the Red Scare.

"It is a historical fact that he surrendered the names of dues paying members to the House Committee on Un-American Activities — a Joseph McCarthy Does being a veteran guarantee someone a federal job? No, but it

orchestrated witch hunt,” Bastani wrote. “We recognize Mr. Reagan had the right to pursue his own personal political agenda. However, he did not have the right to take these actions while representing union members who were being harassed and bullied by the federal government simply for exercising their first amendment rights.”

The Washington Post obituary of Reagan, by Lou Cannon, a former Post reporter and Reagan biographer, does not confirm that Reagan supplied names. But, Cannon wrote: “As president of the Screen Actors Guild, which he led in a successful strike against the movie producers, he helped implement the blacklist that prevented suspected communists from working in movies. At the same time, Reagan opposed what he viewed as an indiscriminate effort by the House Un-American Activities Committee to smear liberals who had unwittingly joined leftist organizations.”

Reagan, ironically and apparently unwittingly, also was on the board of a communist front. In a July 4, 1960, letter to Playboy mogul Hugh Hefner, Reagan explained: “Following World War II my interest in liberalism and my fear of ‘neo-fascism’ led to my serving on the board of directors of an

organization later exposed as a ‘Communist Front,’ namely the ‘Hollywood Independent Citizens Comm. of the Arts, Sciences & Professions.’”

You received this email because you signed up for Federal Insider or because it is included in your subscription. For additional free newsletters or to manage We respect your privacy. If you believe that this email has been sent to you in error or you no longer wish to receive email from The Washington Post, click [here](#). Contact us union members and was able to achieve landmark progress that benefits every member of the Screen Actors Guild to this day,” said John Heubusch, executive director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute. “His Foundation welcomes the Department of Labor’s highest honor and believes Secretary Acosta’s award is more than well deserved.”

Despite Reagan’s attack on a labor organization, the Sergeants Benevolent Association (SBA) nominated him for the Hall of Honor because “he was a turning point for this country,” said SBA President Ed Mullins, noting Reagan’s status as the only U.S. president who led a major union. Mullins also said Reagan’s economic policies helped working people.

Mullins said he understands the objections because of the PATCO episode, but added “Reagan had a big impact on the nation.”

That’s true, but impact can be good or bad. Reagan was terrible for organized labor, which makes the SBA backing peculiar.

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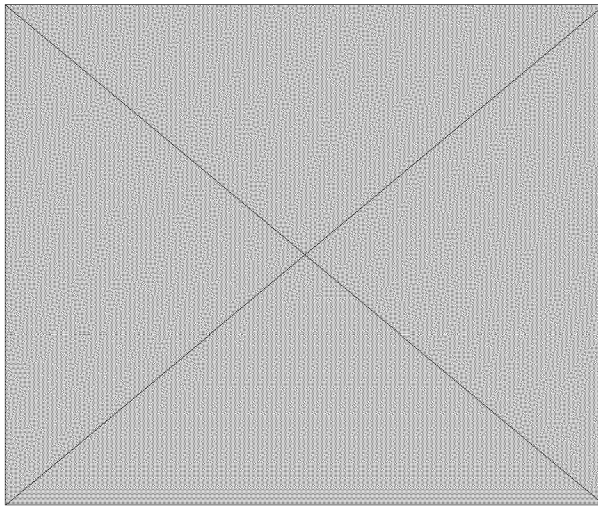
When Reagan is inducted, he will join others whose positive contributions to working people are beyond question. “The Labor Hall of Honor celebrates the bravery of strong, dedicated labor pioneers like Mother Jones, Cesar Chavez and A. Philip Randolph,” Bastani said in his letter. Bayard Rustin, Dolores Huerta, the pioneers of the farmworker movement and the workers of the Memphis sanitation strike also are the list of labor heroes and heroines.

As a labor leader, Reagan was not in their league.

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