



Talking Points on Anti-Union Provisions of Budget Repair Bill

Gov. Scott Walker has proposed radical changes to Wisconsin's half century old collective bargaining laws that for all practical purposes eliminate the right of state, local, and school district employees in Wisconsin to form and maintain unions. This decision has tremendous repercussions for all Citizen Action affiliates and partners:

- Walker's proposal abrogates a fundamental human right which protects the middle class and the American way of life. It would make Wisconsin's public workers second class citizens with fewer rights than other workers.
- Walker is using a short term budget emergency as a pretext for this shocking radical move, but the Governor and Legislature have full authority to balance the state budget without taking away the fundamental rights of Wisconsin's hard working public workers.
- Walker is using public employees as convenient scapegoats for Wisconsin budget crisis, but they are already sharing the pain through unpaid furloughs, layoffs, and wage freezes. A new study by the Economic Policy Institute finds that public employees in Wisconsin make 8.2% less than similar private-sector workers, even when benefits are included.
- The lightning speed with which Walker seeks to make these sweeping and radical changes is fundamentally undemocratic. There needs to be a full public vetting that permits the people of Wisconsin a meaningful opportunity to understand the implications of this proposal. This is especially true when government seeks to take away the rights of average citizens.
- The reason Walker is seeking to act without meaningful public input is that he is doing the bidding of large corporations, who want to eliminate all checks on unfettered corporate power. This is a power grab of epic proportions that will further damage the middle class and shift the balance of power away from average citizens.
- Walker is acting in a shockingly dictatorial manner, refusing to negotiate with public employee unions and even threatening to call out the National Guard. The national guard has not been used in a labor dispute in Wisconsin since 1934, and nationally the last time it was used against public employees was the Memphis sanitation strike in 1968, just before the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Allowing this proposal to rocket through the Legislature sets a dangerous precedent. If Walker can sweep away decades of policy without meaningful public input, he will be emboldened to make similarly dramatic changes in other areas that affect the rights and the quality of life of all Wisconsinites.

