

**WORKERS  
RIGHTS  
ARE  
HUMAN  
RIGHTS!**

## **WHAT'S DISGUSTING? UNION BUSTING!!!**

From the 1880s on, the State of Wisconsin has led the nation in labor rights, organizing against abusive employers and unsafe working conditions. Union actions also led to the 40-hour work week, the 8-hour work day, and the worker's rights and employment compensation laws.

In 1959, Wisconsin initiated the first collective bargaining law and negotiated contracts which gave workers a voice and addressed:

- **Wages, and promotions**
- **Working conditions**
- **Benefits**
- **Training**
- **Protection against politically motivated discipline and discrimination**

In 2011, Scott Walker tried to undo all that. And more.

As part of the now infamous Budget Repair Bill and in the guise of fiscal necessity, Walker proposed:

- **Increasing employee contributions to both health insurance and retirement plans by as much as 12%**
- **Preventing employers from collecting union dues through payroll deduction**
- **Removing certain employee protections in disputes**
- **Requiring unions to recertify annually with more than 51% of all workers in the bargaining unit**
- **Eliminating arbitration in labor disputes**
- **Eliminating existing step pay and other merit awards**
- **Outlawing collective bargaining except for base wages**

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Then *despite union concessions* on employee health and retirement contributions, **Walker refused to negotiate**, claiming the state was broke and all the changes were necessary.

The part of the Budget Bill that contained the union-busting proviso was subsequently rushed through the state assembly and senate and, under a firestorm of protests across the state, quickly passed and signed into law.

Since then, that law has been in and out of the courts. First over violations of the open meetings law. Again when that ruling was overturned. And today as the subject of two Federal lawsuits filed by labor unions claiming that the law is unconstitutional and in violation the 1st and/or 14th Amendments since it would strip away basic rights to bargain, organize and associate for the purpose of engaging in union activity—rights which have been in place for the last half century.

No one knows what will happen next. But what we do know is that this part of the Budget Bill was *never* about the Budget.

Scott Walker himself admitted under pressure during a Congressional hearing in April that destroying the unions wouldn't save the state money. Sen. Scott Fitzgerald told *Fox News* that the whole point of breaking the unions was the 2012 presidential elections, when unions would typically give more money to the Democrats. Unions, of course, represent the last organized line of defense against unlimited corporate campaign spending since the pro-right Citizen's United Supreme Court ruling went into effect.

Union busting *is* disgusting. And bad for the State of Wisconsin, bad for the U.S.A.

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