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## NEWS FROM THE AFL-CIO, CtW, INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL UNIONS

**AFL-CIO launched “We Are One”** campaign in support of embattled state and local government workers across the nation. Campaign emphasizes social media, such as Facebook and Twitter to mobilize solidarity for workers under attack in many states. Anti-union Republican governors across the nation have targeted the union rights of government workers as an excuse to balance financially strapped budgets. Union protests swelled to tens of thousands in Madison, Wisconsin, the epicenter of what is shaping up as an historic battle over workers’ rights, where new GOP Gov. Scott Walker is attempting to eliminate collective bargaining for public employees. Thousands protested a similar proposal to strip public workers of their collective bargaining rights in Ohio.

**In addition to Wisconsin and Ohio,** anti-union Republican governors and state legislatures are considering similar anti-worker laws in numerous other states. Hundreds demonstrated in Tennessee, where the Republican-led legislature advanced bills to restrict bargaining rights for teachers’ unions. Anti-union lawmakers from Nevada to New Hampshire have used the excuse of budget deficits to target the union rights of working families. Union pressure forced Indiana legislature

to withdraw a “right-to-work” bill, but other attacks continued, such as the repeal of prevailing construction wage requirements on state projects. Meanwhile, a recent USA-Gallup poll showed that Americans strongly oppose laws taking away the collective bargaining power of public employee unions. According to the poll, 61 percent oppose a law in their state similar to the anti-collective bargaining law in Wisconsin, with only 33 percent in favor.

**In a rare joint appearance before Congress,** U.S. Chamber President Thomas Donohue and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka testified in favor of a new surface transportation bill which funds highway and mass transit systems. “While there are many policy areas where we have sharp differences, we both realize that our country needs to step up our ‘Investment in America’ for business as well as working Americans to succeed,” Trumka told the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

**“Your remark, ‘So be it,’ to the loss of approximately another million jobs that would occur from your proposed cuts to the federal budget defies both logic and basic fairness,”** declared Change to Win Chair Joe Hansen last month in response to U.S. House of Representatives John Boehner’s comments about the impact of his policies on jobs. Hansen, who also serves as president of the United Food & Commercial Workers, challenged Boehner for his insensitivity to working Americans.

“Working people have already paid and paid again for the devastation caused to our economy by Wall Street gamblers and irresponsible bankers,” he said. “Loss of wages, loss of retirement funds, loss of health care — tens of millions of working families have already been driven to the edge of despair by our nation’s economic collapse.”

**More than 2,500 environmental, business and community representatives** attended the 2011 Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference held in Washington,



AIL Joins Rally in Indiana.

D.C., Feb. 8-10. The conference is sponsored by BlueGreen Alliance Foundation, formed in 2006 between the United Steelworkers (USW) and the Sierra Club, has now grown to include eight US unions, several environmental organizations, and a handful of trade groups. Participants discuss the best ways to build a sustainable economy that creates “good green jobs” across the country. United Steel Workers union President Leo Gerard opened the conference by urging delegates to “push” political leaders to act “in the long-term interests” of the country.

### **AFL-CIO President Emeritus**

John Sweeney was one of 15 people who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. Sweeney was among those honored in a White House ceremony with President Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. “It is with great admiration and respect that I accept this award on behalf of hard-working Americans. I am deeply fortunate to have been able to devote my life to protecting and promoting the rights of working families everywhere,” Sweeney said on accepting the award. Sweeney served as president of the 12-million member federation from 1995-2009. He previously served as international president of the Service Employees International Union.



John Sweeney receives the Presidential Medal of Freedom  
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### **Flight attendants from the former**

America West and US Airways conducted nationwide picketing last month at US Airways’ four hub airports to protest the lack of progress in contract negotiations to merge the two airlines. Five years after the merger of America West and US Airways, flight attendants still work under separate contracts. “Flight Attendants are united in their effort to reach a fair contract that reflects the sacrifices they made for the success

of the airline,” said the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA in a statement. According to the union, the AFA Joint Negotiating Committee broke off talks in February “after US Airways management presented a proposal that contained concessions in healthcare and sick benefits, gutted scope and merger protections for Flight Attendants, and contained no meaningful wage increases.” The union pointed out US Airways reported their second biggest profit in the airline’s history in 2010.



Good Jobs, Green Jobs National Conference  
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## **INTERNATIONAL LABOR NEWS**

### **Officials of South Korea’s**

Sungwon Construction Union and the Korean Construction Company Employees Unions, affiliated to the Korean Federation of Construction Industry Trade Unions, recently toured the United States to publicize the struggle of the Sungwon Construction Union. Jeon Yoon Soo, former Chair and CEO of Sungwon Construction, a major South Korean construction company with projects all over the world, fled last October to the United States to escape possible charges of corruption, illegal transfer of funds, and embezzlement in relation to the bankruptcy of Sungwon Construction. As a result of Sungwon Construction’s financial

collapse, more than 600 workers at Sungwon have not been paid for several months.

**Egyptian union leaders announced** formation of a new labor federation, the Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions, which will represent workers in more than a dozen industries and enterprises. Global unions and international labor groups immediately pledged support for the new trade union center. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) congratulated the Egyptian unions and supported their call for a general strike during the public demonstrations which led to the downfall of the Mubarak regime. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka also said, "We salute you in this brave endeavor and join the international labor movement in standing with you." Two Egyptian union leaders, Kamal Abbas and Kamal Abu Eita, were recipients of the AFL-CIO's George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award last year.

## NATIONAL & POLITICAL EVENTS

**President Obama accused** Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker of unleashing an "assault" on workers' rights by pushing legislation that would strip most of the state's public workers of their collective bargaining rights. "Some of what I've heard coming out of Wisconsin, where they're just making it harder for public employees to collectively bargain generally, seems like more of an assault on unions," Obama told a Milwaukee television reporter. He said it's "important to recognize that public employees make enormous contributions to our states and our citizens." In addition to the President, numerous faith leaders, prominent personalities and community organizations have publicly stated their support for Wisconsin's public workers. Milwaukee Archbishop Jerome Listcki, Bishop Linda Lee of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church and Madison Rabbi Jonathan Biatch are among the faith leaders who invoked church and biblical teachings upholding the rights of workers to organize. Members of the Super Bowl-winning Green Bay Packers also came out in support of the workers.



Social Security Protestors  
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**A recent report by the Congressional Budget Office** showed Social Security is still projected to run an \$868 billion surplus over the next decade, building up a trust fund sufficient to last through the peak baby boomer retirement years, concluded economist Monique Morrissey with the Economic Policy Institute. Although the weak economy continues to be a drag on Social Security's short-term finances as payroll tax receipts lags pre-recession projections, outlays are also higher than anticipated before the downturn, as Social Security has helped cushion the blow for older workers who have lost their jobs, she said. "This will have little impact on Social Security's long-term finances, however, in part because workers who take early retirement receive reduced benefits," she said. Morrissey also said recent news reports misrepresent the trust fund's solvency by excluding interest earnings, "a major source of revenue for Social Security."

## REGIONAL & LOCAL LABOR NEWS

**In a campaign that lasted** months, the majority of 600 service workers at St. Charles Hospital in Bend, Oregon, recently voted 267 to 26 to join SEIU Local 49 in one of the biggest organizing victories in the state in 30 years. According to news reports, St. Charles workers had only one 2-percent raise over the last three years and nearly one third of the housekeeping

staff was laid off and replaced with temporary workers. "This victory comes after months of hard work by hospital caregivers in Bend, and an election that was delayed by challenged ballots. Through it all, these 600 workers persevered, determined to make their voices heard. Now these workers will have a real voice at work, a seat at the bargaining table, and the ability to negotiate over the care they deliver and the conditions under which they work," the union said in a statement. The last NRLB election of this size in Oregon was with Steel Workers at Precision Cast Parts in 1995, and again in 1996 for 1,700 workers. Both attempts were unsuccessful due to illegal employer activity.

**Demonstrating around the** theme of "Toy Story 3" which has been nominated for an Academy Award this year, Walt Disney World workers held a rally near the park in support of contract negotiations. Some 100 workers, many in costumes, marched and carried signs calling for a "Fair Contract Now." Disney and six unions representing about 58,000 workers have been trying to reach an agreement since October. The main issue is management's demands for workers to pay more for their health care. "Don't abandon those who made you what you are today. I feel abandoned. Our members feel abandoned. And that's what Disney is trying to do to us," union leader Eric Clinton said.

**Las Vegas police arrested 22** members of Culinary Workers Local 226 who blocked an entrance to the Palace Station in an act of civil disobedience as part of a union organizing campaign at Station Casinos, Inc. "I'm willing to be arrested. I'm out here to fight for equal rights for all workers," Jeanette Hill, a 32-year employee with the Flamingo, who was one of the protesters arrested, told the news media. According to news reports, more than 750 culinary workers protested for more than six hours near Palace Station demanding "our right to organize." The union also urged Station Casinos to support the union's efforts to establish a new standard when it comes to alleged discrimination against employees based on national origin. The action is part of a long-term organizing

campaign by the Culinary union aimed at almost 13,000 workers at the 18 hotel-casinos operated by Station Casinos in Southern Nevada.

### **More than 1,000 union activists**

and supporters recently held a rally calling attention to a strategy meeting of extremely conservative, right-wing billionaires, and leaders in Palm Springs, Calif. Rally participants included union members of the California Nurses Association/National Nurses United (CNA/NNU) and AFSCME, in addition to representatives from Health Care for America Now (HCAN) and Common Cause. The meeting was organized by billionaire brothers David and Charles Koch, who were instrumental in funding the tea party movement. Right-wing conspirator theorist Glenn Beck, members of Congress and Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia have been past participants in the strategy meetings. "A key threat in the secret political history of the Kochs has been their opposition to the Social Security and Medicare programs. We speak out because our patients rely on these programs," CNA/NNU Co-President DeAnn McEwen said at the rally.

## **IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

**The nation's 40,000-plus Transportation Security Administration (TSA) airport screeners began voting March 9 on whether they want union representation. Two unions in the election include the American Federation of Government Employees and National Treasury Employees Union. Balloting ends April 19. When Congress created the TSA in 2003, it gave the administrator the authority to decide whether or not screeners should be allowed to engage in collective bargaining. Bush administration TSA chiefs did not permit bargaining. In February, TSA Administrator John Pistole said collective bargaining "would not jeopardize" the nation, which led to the historic vote. "The safety of the traveling public is our top priority and we will not negotiate on security," Pistole said.**

### **Secretary of Education Arne**

Duncan declared that teachers' unions can help solve many of the challenges facing public schools if they are included in a good faith effort to raise student achievement. He made the comments during a two-day labor-management conference sponsored by the Department of Education. "We have to learn to problem-solve together," he said, underscoring his view that school systems can face challenges most effectively by working with unions. But Republican leaders in many states challenge his views, and have proposed legislation that limits or bars teachers' unions from all policy discussions. In Tennessee and Wisconsin, for examples, Republicans have proposed stripping teachers' unions of collective bargaining rights altogether. But Duncan cited several districts and their unions for innovative collaborative initiatives.

### **American Federation of Gov-**

**ernment Employees Union** launched \$1 million-plus nationwide campaign to fight looming cuts to the federal workforce. "We're acknowledging that it's our union that has to carry the story of federal workers," said AFGE President John Gage. With more than 270,000 dues-paying members, AFGE is the largest federal employee union. Gage said AFGE has joined forces with other federal unions to fight targeted cuts. Federal workers have been targeted by both Republican lawmakers and the White House as both seek to reduce the deficit by reorganizing and reducing government. The Obama Administration has proposed a five-year freeze on some non-security spending after imposing a two-year pay freeze last year. Republicans in the House majority have proposed deeper cuts, including furloughs and a ban on union work on government time.

### **Connecticut AFL-CIO urged**

Gov. Daniel P. Malloy to impose a higher tax rate on the top 4 percent of earners in the state rather than balance the state's budget with \$2 billion in concessions from state workers. "Connecticut's working families didn't create this economic mess, but we are left with the tab and told to share in the sacrifice," said state AFL-CIO head John Olsen. Olsen said those making over \$412,000

in Connecticut who benefited from some \$3 billion in federal tax credits when the Bush tax cuts were recently extended by Congress should be asked to pay more in state taxes. In his budget address, Malloy said workers' wages and benefits "are simply not sustainable." He has proposed cuts of \$1 billion in each year of the two-year budget from the workers and \$800 million in agency cuts, balanced against tax increases of \$1.5 billion to take care of a \$3.2 billion deficit.

## **SIGNIFICANT LEGAL AND NLRB DECISIONS**

### **Plumbers' Road Sprinkler Fitters**

Local Union No. 669 won the right to a new election at a Texas company under a settlement with the National Labor Relations Board. In addition, five employees were offered reinstatement and \$45,000 in backpay. The union lost an election by three votes at Jerry Dickerson Automatic Fire Protection in Waco, but filed charges against the company. The union alleged the employer engaged in unfair labor practices leading up to and following the vote, including the discharges and refusals to hire. The charges were upheld by the Regional Director, which led to the employer's agreement to re-run the election and to the backpay award. According to the labor board, the employer also agreed, among other things, not "to terminate, discipline, otherwise discriminate against or threaten employees because of their union activities."

**LABOR LETTER**  
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## STANDING WITH AMERICAN LABOR

Republican Governors and other elected officials who received bucket loads of campaign contributions are paying back their wealthy benefactors. The attacks on the middle class, public employees, private workers, and collective bargaining rights are pure political payback.

For decades collective bargaining has worked to create a solid middle class. There is a frontal assault on the middle class, and the right to collective bargaining is the target.

Governors like Walker and Kasich (to name two) justify their efforts to break the unions under the shroud of solving the state budget crisis. Their attempts to take away the collective bargaining rights of public employees, and mandate Right-to-Work laws are acts of pure union-busting. This is the cost to unions who opposed their elections.

The right to collective bargaining is the essence of democracy in the workplace. It is a process that works in both good and bad economic times. Governors and their supporters have turned their back on compromises offered by the very workers who provide essential state services.

Today, as in the past, workers are demonstrating their willingness to make sacrifices in their pay and benefits during economic downturns. Collective bargaining is a process which offers solutions in a crisis. Gutting bargaining is bad business.

Unions and collective bargaining should be embraced by responsible employers. Government and private employment should create good middle class jobs. In reality, there will not be a robust middle class without a

strong labor movement. Where will business be without a robust middle class?

Responsible business leaders should voice their opposition to the misguided 'pay-back' attacks on the middle class. At American Income and National Income, we stand with union workers everywhere who are

under attack. We are committing financial, field and other resources in support of this fight.

For AIL/NILICO it is imperative to be a business voice of reason. Collective bargaining is good for workers, good for business and good for America.



Union members and supporters, including AIL, protest at the Wisconsin state capitol in defense of strike union and collective bargaining rights.

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**These outstanding union leaders are members of the American Income Life & National Income Life Labor Advisory Board.**

With their advice, American Income Life Insurance Company provides substantial financial assistance to labor and labor-related causes, and develops programs to best meet the needs of union members and their families.

Membership on the Advisory Board constitutes neither an endorsement of American Income Life Insurance Company nor its products. The only obligation of membership on the Board is to provide guidance on how AIL might best serve the interests of their respective members and the labor movement.

Labor Advisory Board members recognize that AIL is a fully organized, 100 percent union company that offers supplemental insurance plans primarily to union members. AIL is honored to be among those "All-Union Wall-to-Wall" companies cited by the AFL-CIO Union Label and Service Trades Department.

# AIL JOINS THE FIGHT FOR UNION RIGHTS

Across the nation, AIL/NILICO representatives participated in rallies, demonstrations and protests in support of the union rights of private and public sector workers. AIL/NILICO is a 100 percent union company whose employees are members of Office & Professional Employees International Local 277.

AIL/NILICO also is standing in solidarity with union workers with financial assistance and other support.

In Wisconsin, where teachers and public employees' rights are under attack, AIL/NILICO was prominently visible in rallies and demonstrations. AIL/NILICO's Laurie Onasch was a leader in the fight for Wisconsin workers and spoke before thousands of union members in Olympia, Washington participating in a rally in support of Wisconsin workers.

In addition to the assault on workers' collective bargaining rights, so-called "right-to-work" laws are introduced in a number of states. AIL/NILICO purchased ads opposing RTW.

"The union movement in America is under attack as never before. Fair-minded and concerned Americans must stand up in support of workers' rights," said AIL/NILICO President & CEO Roger Smith.



**AIL Marches with Labor in Wisconsin** (Above)

AIL/NILICO actively participated in the mass demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin in February that drew tens of thousands of union members and supporters to the state capitol in defense of union bargaining rights.



**Big Washington State Rally** (Above)

Union families and supporters across the nation participated in rallies and demonstrations in support of union workers under attack. AIL/NILICO's Laurie Onasch, shown above addressing the crowd, was among the leaders at a huge solidarity rally in Olympia, Washington last month.



**AIL Joins Rallies Across the Country** (Above)



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