

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers



President's Report

March 2011

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

While I was at the Iowa Federation of Labor's legislative conference in Des Moines on President's Day I had the opportunity to attend a rally at the state capitol building. There were several letter carriers and other postal employees at the rally to support the working men and women of this country, as well as a couple thousand more union activists. The Wisconsin legislature is attempting to take away public employees' rights to bargain. A bill is before the Iowa legislature that would strip unions of bargaining rights and allow workers to become "free agents" – because it works so well for pro sports? It will likely be stopped in the senate by a slim margin – for now.

I sincerely hope everyone is paying attention.

We are seeing our rights evaporate right before our eyes. If some of the public employees in Wisconsin lose the right to negotiate certain terms of their contract, what will stop the rest of the public employees from losing their right to bargain? What will stop the loss of the right to bargain for anything at all? And then what will stop the loss of our right, and the rest of America's unions' rights to negotiate the terms of our contracts? Can you imagine working for a postal service without a contract or any union protection?

When big corporations are successful at putting even more politicians in office to make laws that overwhelmingly favor them, it will continue to be at the expense of workers – that's you and me. We will be paying more for health care and other services, and more in taxes, while earning less. At the other end of the scale the people at the top will enjoy the fruits of our labor without sharing the profits.

We have been duped.

Corporate America – big business and the owners have already achieved more favorable tax rates for themselves. This reduces the money flowing into state treasuries. In turn the state has less to pay employees and claims that the only way to balance the budget is to reduce the payroll and/or benefits. Then somehow convinces most of us that the public employees are the bad guys because they don't pay as much for their health insurance as many workers in the private sector.

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The guys who didn't need the tax break in the first place seem so far removed from the problem at hand that we don't follow the trail back to them.

Wake up. You have time to be prepared for the next election. Watch what is happening to the average American worker. Your vote will be more important than it has ever been.

In Unionism,

Jim Beach

President

Iowa State Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO

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