



Christie, Year 2: 'Stay the Course'

Wall Street Journal Online

1/10/11

In his first State of the State speech on Tuesday, Mr. Christie will focus on three issues: education, public pensions and benefits, and fiscal discipline.

“I don’t think there’s going to be any new ground broken, in terms of proposals,” he said. “We’ve done well, we’ve made great progress in the first year, let’s continue to push and tackle the really big issues.”

A Special Role for Special Interests

Wall Street Journal Online

1/10/11

“The large government we have is all too often responsive to the special interests, over the people of the State of New York,” Mr. Cuomo said at his State of the State speech.

Among these stakeholders are the state’s largest health-care union, 1199 SEIU, the two major hospital associations, as well as representatives of other Medicaid providers that regularly employ lobbyists in Albany. The stakeholders also include the state’s largest teachers union, New York State United Teachers.

'I'm Not a Car Guy': On the Road With the New Man at GM's Wheel

Wall Street Journal Online

1/08/11

“It’s an asset that I’m not a car guy,” says Mr. Akerson, 62, a veteran of Nextel and MCI and most recently of buyout firm Carlyle Group. He points to the advantages of a newcomer perspective for an auto maker long criticized for hidebound ways. As for not knowing details of the Volt’s new technology, he notes that “GM has a lot of smart people who do.”

His approach makes Mr. Akerson “exactly the CEO this company needs at this time,” says Stephen Girsky, a vice chairman who represents a trust for United Auto Workers retirees on the board.

The Great Lone Star Migration

Wall Street Journal Online, 1/8/2011

After the initial results of the 2010 Census were released before Christmas, commentators focused on their short-term political effects and demographic implications. Many noted the six House seats and electoral votes that will be reapportioned to states carried by John McCain from states carried by Barack Obama. Others noted that California, for the first time since it was admitted to the Union in 1850, gained no new seats

But unionized factories have been poor competitors over the past 40 years, and high urban crime rates have wreaked huge damage in cities like Detroit. People have been outmigrating from the Foundry since 1970, and the region's net population increased only 13% in 1970-2010, the lowest rate of any region in the nation.

Files Reveal Carpenters Union still under mob influence

New York Times Online
01/092011

“My office has deep historical knowledge and is developing current information about actual and attempted influence of organized crime over the affairs of the district council and the funds,” the review officer, Dennis M. Walsh, wrote in the report. “We have developed sufficient information to reasonably suspect that there are certain district council employees who have been and are currently under the influence of La Cosa Nostra figures.”

But, as Mr. Walsh points out in his report, the challenge facing the District Council is not insignificant. It has been for decades, he noted, “a fiefdom for brutes, thieves, con men and other species of racketeers who have subjugated and robbed its members and vitiated its democratic and benevolent purpose.”

Emanuel Says He Favors Reduced Pensions for Current Workers and New Hires

New York Times Online
01/08/2011

Although Mr. Emanuel has not yet publicly detailed his plan to confront the city's perennial budget deficits and the severely underfinanced employee pension funds, he told union officials in a private meeting on Dec. 15 that he thought it could be necessary to cut the pensions of all employees, said people who attended the meeting.

Business Group Prepares Plans to Counter Unions

New York Times Online

01/08/2011

It has already changed its name once during its two-month existence and one prominent board member, Richard D. Parsons, the chairman of Citigroup, has already resigned, possibly under pressure from public employee unions.

But the powerful real estate moguls, bankers and business executives behind the Committee to Save New York are moving ahead and expect to run their first television commercial early next week supporting Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's campaign to oppose tax increases, reduce the size of government and reform Medicaid and public employee pensions.

Public Workers: The New Scapegoats?

New York Times Online

1/05/2011

Anyone who thinks unionized public employees are getting outrageous pay and benefits, and that this is the chief cause of state and municipal budget crises, should try living on a typical public employee's salary — or pension, for that matter.

Don't let labor issues dominate Legislature

Gary Post-Tribune Online

1/09/2011

The atmosphere was a bit contentious on the opening day of the General Assembly on Wednesday when two bills opposing the interests of organized labor were introduced.

They involve:

The so-called right-to-work legislation that would prohibit companies from making union dues or membership a requirement of employment. The bill would make it a Class A misdemeanor to violate the law.

Giving bidders, contractors and subcontractors working on public works projects the ability to avoid agreements with labor organizations.

Moving forward with either bill could serve to make it virtually impossible to get minority Democrats to work with Republicans on key issues such as education reform, government reform and criminal justice reform to name a few issues.

Republicans would be well-advised to look back to 1995, when their proposal to change the state's prevailing wage law would have reduced pay for workers in public construction projects.

That proposal brought 20,000 angry union members to a Statehouse protest and helped Democrats win a majority in the House the next election.

Wrong year for contentious Right To Work fight

Fortwayne.com
1/09/2011

On the surface, Wednesday's dust-up was about whether bills should be subject to a first-reading vote. But the real issue was Democratic leader Pat Bauer's intent to demonstrate his caucus' adamant opposition to a proposed "right-to-work" law, one that would weaken unions by specifying that employees can join a unionized workforce without belonging to the union or paying dues.

State Of The Unions

New Yorker Online, 1/17/2011

The hostility to labor is most obvious in the attacks on public-sector workers as what Tim Pawlenty, Minnesota's former governor, calls "exploiters"—cosseted, overpaid bureaucrats whose gold-plated pension and health plans are busting state budgets. But there's also been a backlash against labor generally. In 2009, for the first time ever, support for unions in the Gallup poll dipped below fifty per cent. A 2010 Pew Research poll offered even worse numbers, with just forty-one per cent of respondents saying they had a favorable view of unions, the lowest level of support in the history of that poll.

"Cross us and people will die"

Washington Times Online
1/09/2011

"Cross us and people will die." That is the message the public can take away from last week's New York snow-removal meltdown (no pun intended). The debacle showed how government employee unions, by holding a monopoly on services,

can cripple communities in retaliation for not getting what they want. And they will do it time and time again.

The NFL's Dickensian Moment

National Review Online

1/08/2011

In truth, charges of greed and imprudence can be leveled against both the players and owners. But the NFLPA is right to push for a heightened emphasis on player safety and medical coverage, especially given the recent spike in concussions and the publication of new scientific evidence linking head trauma with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease. The owners, meanwhile, are wholly justified in their efforts to curb excessive rookie salaries, with compensation tied more to on-field performance than to draft position. (Exhibit A: the \$68 million JaMarcus Russell fiasco.)

President Makes Nominations to Labor Board Amid Increased NLRB Activism

NAM's Shopfloor blog

1/07/2011

The National Association of Manufacturers has long been troubled that the current NLRB, which includes the controversial Craig Becker, intends to bend its authority to implement the goals of the jobs-killing Employee Free Choice Act, skewing the balance of labor relations towards labor unions. The changes sought by the NLRB produce a tremendous amount of uncertainty for employers, which in turn threatens jobs creation and the economic recovery.

We're Robbing Our Children Right Now: Money Intended for Students Going for Teacher Healthcare

Eagle-Tribune Online

1/09/2011

The study analyzed the state's cities and towns as a whole, finding that from 2000 to 2007, school health care costs grew by \$1 billion — 13.6 percent per year — while state aid to local school districts increased by only \$700 million. The study, by the Boston Foundation and the Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education, points out that state aid to local districts is being outpaced and completely consumed by rising health care expenses.

“We’re robbing our children right now,” Haverhill Mayor James Fiorentini said, pointing out that the money being spent on health care could instead be used to buy textbooks, train teachers, and improve academics.

Will the Union-Controlled NLRB Kick the Girl Scouts Out On the Streets?

Red-State Online
1/10/11

Last February, a group of Girl Scouts planning to sell their cookies in front of a Richmond, Virginia grocery store were turned away from the store by its new owners.

“In the past, Ukrop’s has helped several non-profit, charitable, and service organizations in their fundraising efforts by allowing them to use the sidewalk space near the entrance of their stores,” the statement, which is excerpted in a notice on the state Girl Scout Web site, reads. “As we make the transition to new ownership, Giant/Martin’s new sidewalk policy does not make provisions for sidewalk vending at any of their stores.”

Mark Mix in Indianapolis Star: Union bosses distort right-to-work facts

Indystar.com
1/07/2011

In their anger, union bosses are displaying a near-total disregard for the facts. In one remarkable example, the hierarchy of the Indiana AFL-CIO has posted on its website a screed insisting state right-to-work legislation is not necessary, because “federal law already protects workers who don’t want to join a union to get or keep their jobs.”

New York City’s No-Show SEIU Snow Jobs

BigGovernment.com, 1/6/2011

This is to confirm our mutual understanding and agreement that effective January 1, 2007, the Sanitation Officers Association shall be permitted five (5) additional full-time positions with full pay and benefits pursuant to Executive Order No. 75.

These five (5) positions are in addition to the one (1) additional full-time position with full pay and benefits effective July 31, 1999, that the Sanitation Officers Association shall be permitted pursuant to Executive Order No. 75 which had been funded in the 2000-2003 collective bargaining settlement. [Emphasis added]