



Senate Budget Chair to Retire in 2012

Wall Street Journal Online
1/18/2011

North Dakota Democratic Sen. Kent Conrad announced his retirement Tuesday morning in a letter to supporters, giving Republicans a shot at another 2012 Senate pickup in a GOP-prone state.

City Drafts Bankruptcy Exit

Wall Street Journal Online
1/18/2011

The scaled-down employee benefits and pensions included in the city's proposal are being closely watched by many municipalities whose budgets have been pressured by rising costs and declining revenues as a result of the recession.

“Vallejo is an example of how compensation and benefits had been part of the politics of the city and it ultimately got the city in trouble,” said Charlie Long, former city manager of nearby Fairfield, Calif. How Vallejo addresses those issues are “a vital lesson that a lot of people are paying

Labor Board Warns on Secret Ballots

Wall Street Journal Online
1/18/2011

The National Labor Relations Board has threatened to sue the states of Arizona, South Carolina, South Dakota and Utah over recently passed state constitutional amendments that require secret-ballot elections before a company can be unionized.

Unions Mobilize Against Curbs

Wall Street Journal Online
1/18/2011

Union members, clergy and community leaders were using a pre-Martin Luther King Day candlelight vigil in Cincinnati on Friday to protest proposals by Republican Ohio Gov. John Kasich to eliminate collective-bargaining rights for thousands of home health-care workers.

Obama Launches Rule Review, Pledging to Spur Jobs, Growth

Wall Street Journal Online
1/18/2011

The move is the latest effort by the White House to repair relations with corporate America, hoping to spur investment by the nation's largest multinationals and reduce unemployment.

Detroit and Decay

Wall Street Journal Online
1/15/2011

The city may abandon half its schools to pay union benefits.

Detroit was once America's fourth largest city, though today large sections of its inner core are abandoned to the elements, and monuments like Michigan Central Station are returning to dust. Another emblem of civic decline is a plan to desert nearly half of Detroit's public schools so that it can afford to fulfill its teachers union contract.

Desperate Union bosses campaign to boost image of public workers

Wall Street Journal Online
1/14/2011

Cash-strapped states from New York to California want to freeze wages or cut pension benefits of public employees to help balance budgets. At least 16 states are expected to consider legislation that would take away the right of unions to use payroll deductions for political purposes. And 10 other states may take up "right to work" bills that would prevent workers from being required to join or pay dues to a union.

EDITORIAL: Don't let labor issues dominate Indiana Legislature

Indiana Economic Digest
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.

Protect workers from union bosses

Washington Times Online
1/17/2011

It's time to pass the Secret Ballot Protection Act

Legal battles over federal pre-emption have snarled federal courts in recent years, but the Obama administration has a curious record on the subject. When a federal law would pre-empt plaintiffs lawyers from big-money suits, the administration sides with the lawyers against federal power; when federal law would pre-empt a state's voters from democratically choosing labor or immigration laws, the administration sides with federal power, against the voters. Either way, the White House sides with its powerful allies, no matter what voters desire.

Right to Work law would hurt the workers of N.H.

Seacoast Online

State Rep. Will Smith is proposing a disingenuous bill he calls the "Right to Work Law." He claims there are corporations that will not locate in New Hampshire without this regressive policy. He neglects to name these companies. That is because he knows we will recognize them as having business practices that cannot exist under the scrutiny of organized labor.

On labor issues, follow the way of Martin Luther King Jr. (Not)

Seattle Times Online
1/17/2011

Gov. John Kasich of Ohio wants to take away the right to join a union for 14,000 state-financed child-care and home-care workers, who are among the most overworked and underpaid of public servants.

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker threatens to end the right of public employees to bargain collectively if they don't accept a tripling of their health-care costs.

The Times recently ran an op-ed by two former Washington legislators [“Government can become smaller while still making moral choices,” Jan. 12] that advocated addressing the state's budget problems by slashing public employment and cutting the wages of those who remain.

There is even talk of extending “right to work” (for less) laws of Southern and some Western states into union strongholds of the Midwest like Indiana. These laws would lower wages and undermine working conditions.

We are now in the latest and potentially most deadly phase of government assault on working people and unions since the Reagan counterrevolution. That movement vastly worsened racial-economic inequalities, created a gambling casino on Wall Street and paved the way for the current economic crisis.

Our view on public pensions: Lavish benefits hurt states

USA Today
1/17/2011

The fact is, the financial situation for many states is dire. Like the federal government, they are getting clobbered by rising health costs. Unlike the federal government, they have a massive problem of lavish retirement benefits for public employees. The Pew Center on the States estimates that state and local governments have promised \$3.35 trillion in benefit plans and have underfunded these plans by \$1 trillion.

Budget Crisis Rhetoric

National Review Online
1/18/2011

Government-budget crises can be painful, but the political rhetoric accompanying these crises can also be fascinating and revealing. Perhaps the most famous American budget crisis was New York City's during the 1970s. When Pres. Gerald Ford was unwilling to bail it out, the famous headline in the New York Daily News read, “Ford to City: Drop Dead.”

Don't be fooled by right-to-work supporters

Letter to the Editor, IndyStar.com
1/18/2011

Mark Mix, president of the National Right to Work Committee, seems determined to sway readers into believing local unions are distorting the truth regarding the so-called “right-to-work” legislation in Indiana (My View, Jan. 8). It’s Mix who distorts reality. Friends and family members of mine who work for nonunion contractors have never been asked or forced to pay union dues on a public works job.

Regardless of SEIUs plans its still a pig in lipstick

BigGovernment.com
1/17/2011

ACORN partner SEIU intends to put lipstick on the public sector unionism pig. They are trying to change the focus away from the inherently flawed system of public employee union monopolies, and put the focus on the many good public employees who manage to excel despite union boss interferences.

Right-to-work is only ruse and it won’t help workers

IndyStar.com
1/18/2011

The ruse perpetrated by the Indiana Chamber of Commerce on the right-to-work issue facing the Indiana legislature is no more than a tactic to weaken labor unions and shore up the power and the pockets of business executives.

FEIGENBAUM: Right-to-work debate could create sparks in Legislature

Indiana Business Journal Online by Ed Feigenbaum
1/15/2011

Both pieces of legislation have been referred to the House Committee on Employment, Labor and Pensions, and the very assignment of a right-to-work bill caused opening-day histrionics as Democrats sought to kill the concept right.

That show of force among supporters of organized labor at the session’s outset offered evidence that this will be an emotional issue. House Speaker Brian Bosma, R–Indianapolis, tried to explain at assorted forums between Election Day and the January festivities that, when it came to offering right-to-work in the Legislature, “Them’s fightin’ words” to many.

Debate Continues Over “Right To Work” bill

Tristate Online
Before 1/18/2011

Senate President David Long (R) says the goal of a right to work bill is to bring businesses to the state.

“The one thing you hear from your economic development people when they are trying to bring in businesses to Indiana is are you a right to work state, if you are not you have one strike against you,” Long said.

Significant labor law changes will bypass Congress

Washington Post Online
1/14/2011

Employers should still expect significant changes, however, as the president will instead advance his regulatory agenda administratively through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and the issuance of executive orders. If you’re running a nonunion workplace today, these developments will make it easier for unions to organize your employees. Regardless of one’s personal feelings about unions or union representation, there’s no question that this increased government oversight, regulation and involvement will have a significant impact on large and small businesses alike.

There has long been speculation that the White House intends to roll out a so-called “High Road Contracting” initiative aimed at federal contractors -- a policy that could have major implications for the Washington region. This regulatory framework would grant a preference to companies that provide their employees with a specified minimum level of wages and benefits, and that demonstrate a history of compliance with various labor laws.

Labor-business clash shifts from Congress

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Online
1/17/2011

Still, in his State of American Business address last week, Chamber of Commerce CEO Tom Donohue warned of “unprecedented regulatory activity and case law changes” in labor law from the Obama administration’s Department of Labor and the NLRB. The five-member board is composed of three Democrats and two Republicans, though there now is one GOP vacancy, with the balance of power shifting depending on which party is in the White House.