



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LABOR RELATIONS RESEARCH

NEWS CLIPS

(Click on headlines for link to full story)

Public Unions: Is California Next?

Wall Street Journal Online

3/31/2011

Wisconsin's public union fight is the battle of the century in American politics. But while the governors of Wisconsin and Ohio have led the pushback, it's possible that the public-pension battle could shift in the future to California—with or without the participation of its governor, the endlessly recyclable Jerry Brown. Even in this bluest of states, the ground is shaking beneath the unions.

Wisconsin Unions Get Ugly

Wall Street Journal Online

3/31/2011

Having lost their fight in the legislature, Wisconsin unions are now getting out the steel pipes for those who don't step lively to their cause. A letter we've seen that was sent to businesses in southeastern Wisconsin shows that Big Labor's latest strategy is to threaten small businesses with boycotts if they don't publicly declare their support for government union monopoly power.

Dated March 28, 2011, the letter is addressed to "DEAR UNION GROVE AREA BUSINESS OWNER/MANAGER," in Racine County. And it begins with this warm greeting: "It is unfortunate that you have chosen 'not' to support public workers rights in Wisconsin. In recent past weeks you have been offered a sign(s) by a public employee(s) who works in one of the state facilities in the Union Grove area. These signs simply said 'This Business Supports Workers Rights,' a simple, subtle and we feel non-controversial statement given the facts at this time."

Teamsters Pension Fund to Cut Payments For YRC Truckers, as TDU Blames Leadership

Daily Labor Report Online

3/31/2011

The Central States, Southeast, and Southwest Areas Pension Fund, which administers pensions for some members of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, March 22 announced major changes to the pension plan for IBT members employed at financially struggling trucking company YRC Worldwide Inc.

Alabama Appeals Injunction Enjoining Law Barring Public Worker Deductions for Politics

Daily Labor Report Online
3/31/2011

The state of Alabama March 22 filed an appeal challenging a federal district court's preliminary injunction barring enforcement of a state law that makes it a crime to arrange for public employee payments "by salary deduction or otherwise" to political action committees or to "membership organizations" including unions that use any portion for "political activity" (Morton v. Alabama Educ. Ass'n, 11th Cir., No. 11-11266, notice of appeal filed 3/22/11).

Many Geothermal Award Fund Recipients Not Paying Prevailing Wages, Report Says

Daily Labor Report Online
3/31/2011

In an audit of the Energy Department's Geothermal Technologies Program, which is funded by the 2009 Recovery Act, Friedman's office found that the department did not adequately train award recipients in how to comply with Davis-Bacon Act prevailing wage requirements, nor did it ensure that prevailing wage provisions were included in subcontractor contracts. Friedman wrote in the audit report that the department had attributed both actions to limited staffing.

Union Transparency Rules Debated By Witnesses Before House Subcommittee

Daily Labor Report Online
3/31/2011

Most witnesses told the House Education and the Workforce Committee's Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions that the rules to revise the Form LM-2 and the Form T-1 effectively increased transparency and accountability protections that they claimed would benefit union members.

A witness on the other side of the issue claimed the Bush-era rules failed to promote the goals of greater transparency and to provide any real benefit to "ordinary" union members.

New Hampshire House Passes Measure To End Union Terms at Contract Expiration

Daily Labor Report Online
3/31/2011

BOSTON—The New Hampshire House March 30 approved legislation (H.B. 2) that would eliminate the negotiated terms and conditions of employment for public sector workers and make them “at-will employees” upon expiration of a collective bargaining agreement.

Ellen McCormack, antiabortion presidential candidate, dies at 84

Washington Post Online
3/31/2011

As the controversy simmered, the right-wing John Birch Society and the National Right to Work Committee, which opposes compulsory union membership, announced their own presidential candidates and began preparing requests for federal funding.

NLRB chairman is glad Americans talking about collective bargaining

Twincities.com
3/31/2011

The NFL labor dispute. The growing backlash against public pensions and health benefits. Wisconsin.

The modern-day debates over outdated labor laws have done much to raise awareness of collective bargaining and what it means in an era of historically low union membership.

Ohio ends public sector collective bargaining, sort of

Public Sector Inc Online
3/31/2011

With considerably less sturm und drang than in Wisconsin, yesterday Ohio's legislature approved a law that will significantly restrict collective bargaining in that state's public sector. The new Ohio law will exclude health and retirement benefits from labor negotiations and abolish binding arbitration. But, as noted in the New York Times, the law also contains a provision that makes it probably more sweeping than the Wisconsin law:

FAA Bill Clears House; Unions, Safety a Focus

Wall Street Journal Online
4/01/2011

The bill would repeal a new rule by the National Mediation Board that allows a union to be formed if a majority of votes cast are in favor of collective bargaining. Previously, it took a majority of a company's entire work force to vote to unionize. That meant that workers who didn't cast votes were counted as "no" votes.

Uncovered: New \$2 billion bailout in Obamacare

Washington Examiner Online
3/32/2011

Investigators for the House Energy and Commerce Committee have discovered that a little-known provision in the national health care law has allowed the federal government to pay nearly \$2 billion to unions, state public employee systems, and big corporations to subsidize health coverage costs for early retirees. At the current rate of payment, the \$5 billion appropriated for the program could be exhausted well before it is set to expire.