

MARCH 2011



# USW LOCAL 1137

Representing the Maintenance, Storeroom  
and Fire Control employees of  
International Paper's Courtland, AL Mill

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Poellnitz

## How Unions Saved the Constitution

Linda R. Monk,



### Upcoming Meetings:

**Monday March 14**  
Monday April 11  
Monday May 9  
3:45 PM

*Scott McCarley  
was the winner  
of the  
USW jacket  
at our February meeting.*

*Stewards Meeting  
Friday March 11  
7:30 a.m.  
Maintenance  
Training Center  
Room 108*



With all the lip-service being paid to the Constitution these days, you'd think unions would get a bit more respect. Without the sacrifices of union activists, the Constitution's promise of free speech might never have become a reality. In rallies much like those currently being held in Wisconsin, and across the nation in state capitals this Saturday, workers during America's first Gilded Age fought back against the forces of corporate greed that ground them to the bone. In those days, the Supreme Court believed that the First Amendment to the Constitution, which protects freedom of speech, only applied to the federal government, not the states and the local governments. So any governor, or mayor, or town boss was free to put you in jail or kick you out of town for saying something they didn't like -- union organizing usually being at the top of the list. But union supporters didn't take that lying down -- they flooded towns with speakers who violated local laws that limited free speech. One of those early union leaders in the fight for free speech was Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, the "Rebel Girl" of martyr Joe Hill's famous song. Flynn worked for the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World, who organized miners and migrant workers in the western states in the early 1900s. These workers had little political clout because they moved from job to job and weren't registered to vote. Presaging the civil rights movement, their principal recourse was a mass protest. Flynn helped lead one of those "free speech fights" in Missoula, Montana, in

*“Without the sacrifices of union activists, the Constitution's promise of free speech might never have become a reality.”*

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Say something GOOD about your Union today

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW News**  
 UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR WORKERS



## In a Democracy, Freedom of Assembly Trumps “Free Enterprise”

*Leo Gerard, USW International President*

It's illegal in America now to buy or sell a human being, but a recorded telephone conversation between a Republican governor and a guy he thought was a billionaire benefactor shows that it's still possible to own a politician.

Wisconsin's Republican Gov. Scott Walker didn't have time to talk to Democratic leaders or union officials about his anti-union legislation – a proposal that has incited protests by tens of thousands for more than a week in Madison. But he jumped on the phone for 20 minutes this week when told the caller was billionaire David Koch, who was Walker's second largest

*“In anti-union states, the average worker earns \$5,333 less a year, the proportion of people without health insurance is 21 percent higher and the rate of workplace death is 51 percent higher”*

campaign contributor, who provided \$1 million to a GOP fund to attack Walker's opponent and who bankrolls radical libertarian organizations and the Tea Party. Republicans like Walker, owned by billionaires like Koch, are fulfilling demands from corporate interests that government “free” enterprise by slashing corporate taxes and regulation. Over the

past three years, America has suffered the consequences of a government under-funded after tax breaks to the rich and under-performing after years of lax regulation. The result: a growing federal deficit, the Wall Street collapse, the BP oil spill and the deaths of 29 Upper Big Branch miners. Still, Republicans want more government atrophy. That would leave only one restraint on corporate control of the economy, environment and government.

That one restraint is labor unions. A union is workers using their constitutionally-guaranteed freedom to as-

semble, the right to get together as a group, in this case a labor organization, to negotiate collectively with employers for better wages, benefits and working conditions.

Workers who gathered together in unions over two centuries in this country have succeeded in raising their wages, as well as the wages of non-union workers in competing industries. Union workers secured improved working conditions so fewer were killed on the job. And they achieved creation of the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration, which protects the safety of all workers. Over the decades, unions played a major role in obtaining legislation barring child labor, standardizing the 40-hour work week, and creating both Social Security and Medicare.

Similarly, studies show union successes enhance the lives of all workers in a state. In anti-union states, the average worker earns \$5,333 less a year, the proportion of people without health insurance is 21 percent higher and the rate of workplace death is 51 percent higher. In addition, there's evidence that union workers improve quality. Currently, after receiving an education from union teachers, Wisconsin youngsters collectively score second highest in the nation on the ACT/SAT college admission tests. By contrast, the five states barring teacher unions rank at the bottom of the pack: South Carolina dead last at 50<sup>th</sup>; North Carolina, second last at 49<sup>th</sup>; Georgia third from last at 47<sup>th</sup>; Texas fourth from last at 47<sup>th</sup>, and Virginia ever so slightly better at 44<sup>th</sup>.

Still, Wisconsin Gov. Walker wants to destroy his state's teachers unions. Two studies determined that public workers, that is those employed by governments such as teachers, firefighters and police officers, earn less than their counterparts in the private sector when both benefits and education are factored into the calculation. It wasn't union workers, in the public or the private sector, who caused states' financial crises. That was gambling on Wall Street, which

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1908. Here's how she described it: "We sent out a call to all 'footloose rebels to come at once -- to defend the Bill of Rights.' A steady stream of I.W.W. members began to flock in by freight cars... As soon as one speaker was arrested, another took his place. The jail was soon filled."

These mass protests in favor of free speech definitely had an effect. In 1925, the Supreme Court finally ruled that the First Amendment did apply to state and local governments, nationalizing the protection of free speech. Without the concerted action of union supporters, that victory would not have been possible.

Unions have contributed remarkable things to the American way of life: the growth of the middle class; expansion of health care and social security; paid vacations and paid sick leave; a work week that leaves time for families to enjoy each other. None of these things were possible in Elizabeth Gurley Flynn's day. As she said in 1962: "We never heard of vacations, let alone vacations with pay."

Make no mistake: What is at risk in Wisconsin, and every state in America, is the quality of life that

American workers have fought -- and died -- for during the past century. When plutocrats like the Koch brothers tell the governor of an American state to roll back the clock on public employees, they are seeking to end protections for all workers. The Kochs are part of an ideological movement that hopes to end all legislation controlling wages, hours, and workplace safety -- returning America to a "Social Darwinism" that ensures survival of the fittest (read: richest). This is the constitutional theory that prevailed before the New Deal. To these extremists, Ayn Rand is on par with James Madison.

We must never forget that the most important achievement of the union movement was the protection of the right that makes all other rights possible -- freedom of speech. The First Amendment comes with a union label.

*This article is adapted from one that originally appeared in the Journal of the Sheet Metal Workers International Association. Linda R. Monk is a constitutional scholar and author of "The Words We Live By: Your Annotated Guide to the Constitution"*

**"The First Amendment comes with a union label."**

## Solis: Governors in Wis. And Ohio Want Workers to Relinquish Their American Rights

The nation's governors met last weekend in Washington, D.C., for their annual conference. Well, not all of them. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker was a no-show, preferring to make the rounds on the weekend television interview programs to explain away why he wants to take away the freedom of public employees to bargain for good middle-class jobs.

Meanwhile, the Democratic National Committee (DNC) also met last weekend. Here are excerpts from the statement U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis made Saturday morning when meeting with the DNC.

*"I've been following the developments in Wisconsin, and Ohio, and many other states across the country. We know that many states are facing tough budget decisions. We know that there's room for shared sacrifice.*

*And we've seen our brothers and sisters in the public employees unions willing to give their share, and to negotiate in good faith to help their states get through tough times.*

*But the governors in Wisconsin and Ohio aren't just asking workers to tighten their belts, they're demanding that they give up their uniquely American rights as workers. These are our neighbors, our friends, our family. They teach our kids and risk their lives to keep us safe. And all they're asking is to be treated with respect. All these workers want is the opportunity to sit down at the table, like grown ups, and work together to solve problems.*

*That's what collective bargaining is all about. We know that sitting down together and working through problems doesn't cause budget problems. In fact, that's how we solve budget problems.*

*In every family in America, that's what they do when times are tough. They talk. They negotiate. And that's what these Governors ought to do."*

Walker needs to read these remarks. And so does Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who's right on the heels of Walker in his attacks on nurses, teachers and EMTs.

*Tula Connell - AFL-CIO Managing Editor*



### *Catching up —*

I will be away from the mill on Thursday March 10, attending a USW District 9 Presidents Meeting in Gadsden. A report on this meeting will be given at our regular meeting on March 14.

I will also be away from the mill the week of March 28, attending the Master Agreement negotiations. I will post daily communications from the talks through our website and via e-mail with our E-Board. Also, we will also be communicating with you, through our Stewards, regarding a Solidarity action taking place at ALL IP facilities between now and the start of the negotiations.

You have received communications from IP regarding CIGNA and talking about various plans of theirs. CIGNA is now the provider of our Dental Insurance but we are not involved in any of their healthcare plans. We need only to be concerned with information from CIGNA which addresses Dental Coverage and/or the Healthcare Spending Accounts. If you and your family are covered under the IP Dental Plan, you should have received new cards in January. If you do not have your CIGNA Dental cards, let us know. You may have also received another mailing from American Income Life Insurance. This company provides all of our members with \$4,000 Accidental Death coverage. The mailing includes a card they would like for you to return to them, designating a beneficiary. Designating a beneficiary may speed up payment of a claim – without a named beneficiary on file the \$4,000 benefit will be paid to your estate. Remember however, you are covered whether you return the card or not. And you are covered without them coming to your house and getting you to sign any-

thing.

As of this writing, outside hiring candidates have completed their AON testing and interviewing should be starting soon. We still don't have definite numbers of how many they plan to hire.

On Saturday February 26 I attended a 'Rally to Save the American Dream' at the State Capitol in Montgomery. This was a rally organized to show our support for, and solidarity with, the public workers under attack in Wisconsin. Rallies were held at all 50 State Capitols that same day. There were about 100-150 folks at the Montgomery rally, not as many as I had hoped to see. As many USW members as there are living within 100 miles of Montgomery, we should have had a MUCH larger crowd. If only the USW members who are married to public employees or have teachers in their families had shown up it would have been front page news. This issue is much bigger than Wisconsin, much bigger than teachers and state employees—it is a fight for the survival of the Middle Class in America and we need to get involved before it is too late.

Thanks for the good turnout at our February meeting, see y'all at the Hall on March 14.

*- Johnny*



(continued from page 2)

ravaged the economy. Still, Republican governors across the country are demanding that government workers pay.

The government workers in Wisconsin already agreed to accept Walker's financial demands – that they pay more for their pensions and health care. This negates Walker's contention that this dispute is about the budget. The governor is demanding more than those financial concessions. He wants the legislature to cripple the unions' ability to bargain for improvements in the future. In his "budget repair bill," he would strip government workers of their right to negotiate over working conditions and benefits. They'd be able to discuss wages but could never get an increase above inflation.

This is union busting. At the demand of corporate interests. And Walker is joined by Republicans in Ohio, Indiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee and others in attempting to do it, both to private and public sector workers. This is not about money. It's about controlling America. Corporations have bought Republicans, who now chant the corporate mantra that government coddles its citizens with the likes of mine and food safety rules.

*Corporations are accomplishing their goal of shriveling government to the point of ineffectiveness so "enterprise" is "free" to run rogue.*

Walker's eagerness to talk to David Koch illustrates this. Koch and his brother Charles own the second largest privately-held company in America. Only the fortunes of Warren Buffett and Bill Gates exceed the Kochs' \$35

billion. They've used that money to finance the supposedly-grassroots Tea Party and conservative groups like the Americans for Prosperity Foundation (APF) that have funneled money into anti-reform policies – including attempts to reverse environmental and health care legislation.

It's a giant circle. Koch got Walker elected. The Koch-backed Tea Party now rallies in Madison against the public employees. The Koch-financed APF bought \$320,000 in TV ads against the public workers. Other Koch-financed GOP governors are sending letters of support to Walker. In his few weeks as governor, Walker passed legislation to lower tax rates for and limit damage awards against businesses like the Kochs'. In addition, tucked into the anti-union bill is a provision that

would enable Walker to sell the state's power plants to the Kochs without bids or state agency review. Corporations are accomplishing their goal of shriveling government to the point of ineffectiveness so "enterprise" is "free" to run rogue. Now with their purchased politicians, corporations are trying to do the same to unions – the only organization other than government that has traditionally effectively defended working Americans.

In the recorded conversation between Walker and a liberal blogger posing as Koch, Walker accepted an offer of a vacation trip from the "billionaire" if he "crushed" the public employee unions and said his effort was to get "our freedoms back." That's exactly right. This is a contest between the excesses of "free" enterprise and the constitutionally-protected freedom of assembly. And getting "our freedoms back" means wresting them back from corporations.





**Washington (CNN) Paul Steinhauser** – A majority of Americans say they oppose attempts to take away the collective bargaining rights of public unions, according to a new national poll.

A USA Today/Gallup survey released Wednesday indicates that 61 percent of the public would oppose a move in their state to pass a bill that would take away some of the collective bargaining rights of union government workers, with one in three saying they'd support such a move.

The poll's release comes as thousands

of protesters rallied for the second straight week outside the Wisconsin state capitol, upset with Gov. Scott Walker's plan to limit collective bargaining rights for public-sector employees. The Republican governor, who was elected last November, says his plan is necessary to reduce his state's budget deficit, but pro-union groups say the governor is trying to curb long-held labor rights under a guise of fiscal responsibility. Fourteen Democratic state senators have fled Wisconsin over the past week to keep the chamber from having a quorum needed to vote on the legislation.

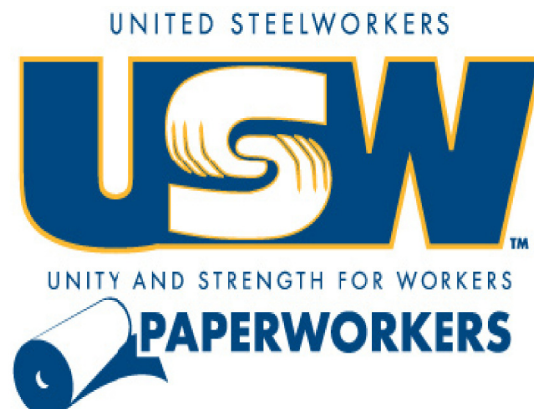
The survey indicates a partisan divide on the issue, with nearly eight in ten Democrats and more than six in ten independent voters opposed to the move, but Republicans by a 54 to 41 percent margin supporting such a move.

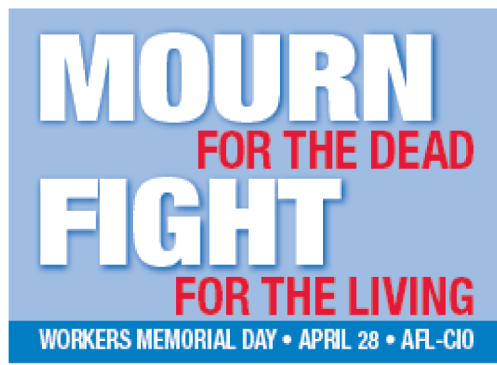
According to the poll, 53 percent of Americans would also oppose a move to reduce pay and benefits the state provides for government workers to reduce the budget deficit, with 44 percent backing the idea.

The survey indicates that the public's split over whether government worker unions are helpful or harmful, with 45 percent saying such unions are helpful to the states where they exist, and 46 percent saying they are harmful.

More than seven out of ten people questioned say they oppose an increase in state sales, income, or other taxes to help reduce their state's budget deficit.

The USA Today/Gallup poll was conducted February 21, with 1,000 adults nationwide questioned by telephone. The survey's overall sampling error is plus or minus four percentage points.





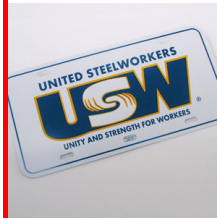
*Workers Memorial Day will be observed again next month. Watch for more details including a "Day of Action" on April 28. We will be distributing stickers and asking everyone to display them on that day.*



# AFL-CIO

America's Union Movement

**WE HAVE SOME  
USW MERCHANDISE AVAILABLE  
FOR SALE IN THE OFFICE  
AND FOR  
DOORPRIZES AT OUR  
UNION MEETINGS!**



CAR TAG



TOTE BAG



16' TAPE



CAPS  
DO-RAGS  
PLAYING  
CARDS  
PORTFOLIOS  
COFFEE MUGS



**WE ALSO STILL HAVE T-SHIRTS  
(M-L-XL-2XL)**



## THANKS

*To everyone who showed their support for the public workers of Wisconsin by wearing RED on the designated day. Watch for other actions to be called for later!*

**Sedgwick CMS Customer Dissatisfaction**



**We are Not Satisfied  
Until You are  
Dissatisfied**

**Just Saying, "DENIED!"  
One Claim at a Time**

*Whenever someone in your crew has a death in their family, please contact Johnny or Edwin so we can take care of the flowers and/or Bibles. Don't just assume we know, we'd rather be told several times than not at all.*



Local 1137 is now on FACEBOOK!  
If you are a Facebook user, search 'Groups' for 'USW Local 1137' and join in. Invite other union members to join us, we think this will be another great communication tool for our members.



[www.UnionSportsmen.org](http://www.UnionSportsmen.org)

**Suggestions and ideas for the newsletter can be turned in to any of the officers. We want this to be interesting and useful for the members of Local 1137 so let us know what you want and need to see in the newsletter and on the website!**



*Check out the Union Plus website to learn about discounts and services available to Union members.*  
[www.unionplus.org](http://www.unionplus.org)

Everyone, especially our stewards, should check out our website at [www.usw1137.org](http://www.usw1137.org) fairly often. We try to keep it updated with the latest information for our members. If you have anything you would like to see posted there, let us know and we will try to do it. We have links to several interesting websites for union members.



*“First they came for the Communists but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Trade Unionists but I was not a Unionist so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Jews but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out.  
And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.” - Pastor Martin Niemoeller (Nazi concentration camp prisoner, 1937-1945)*



**Say something GOOD about your Union today**