

JUST SAY NO! NO MORE CUTS FOR WORKERS

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There should be two lasting lessons to emerge from the heroic labor-led protests in Wisconsin:

First, working people--with our many allies, students, seniors, women's organizations, and more--are inspired and ready to fight.

Second, we need to send a clear and unequivocal message to the right-wing politicians and those in the media suggesting further concessions from working people.

Working people did not create the recession or the budgetary crisis facing federal, state and local governments, and there can be no more concessions, period. It should be apparent that the right wants to scapegoat workers and their unions, and is trying to exploit the economic crisis for an all-out assault on unions, public employees, and all working people in a campaign that is funded by right wing, corporate billionaires like the Koch brothers.

Their goal is no less than to break unions and silence the voice of all working people to fight for better working conditions and improved standards for all working people. For example, while demanding major cuts in public pensions, the right also wants to make sweeping cuts in Social Security, even though Social Security is in sound economic shape.

What all working families should know:

1. **Who caused the economic crisis?** Banks, Wall Street speculators, mortgage lenders, global corporations shifting jobs from the U.S. overseas.
2. **Who is profiting in the recession?** Corporate profits, 3rd quarter of 2010, were \$1.6 trillion, 28 percent higher than the year before, the biggest one-year jump in history. Meanwhile, average wages and total wages have fallen for all incomes, except the wealthiest Americans whose income grew five-fold.
3. **Who is not paying their fair share?** In U.S. states facing a budget shortfall, revenues from corporate taxes have declined \$2.5 billion in the last year. In Wisconsin, two-thirds of corporations pay no taxes, and the share of

state revenue from corporate taxes has fallen by half since 1981. Nationally, according to a General Accountability Study out today, 72 percent of all foreign corporations and about 57 percent of U.S. companies doing business in the United States paid no federal income taxes for at least one year between 1998 and 2005.

4. **Are public employees overpaid?** State workers typically earn 11 percent less, local public workers 12 percent less than private employees with comparable education and experience. Nationally, cutting the federal payroll in half would reduce spending by less than 3 percent.
5. **Would pay and benefit concessions by public employees stop the demands?** The right has made it clear it wants (A) cuts in public pay, pensions, and health benefits, followed by (B) restricting collective bargaining for public sector workers, followed by (C) prohibiting public sector unions.
6. **Will the right be troubled if cuts in working standards make it harder to recruit teachers and other public servants?** No. Take public teachers, many of whom have accepted wage freezes and other cuts in recent years. Many in the right have a fairly open goal of privatizing education, and destabilizing public schools serves this purpose. The right also salutes the shredding of government workforce, part of its overall goal to gut all government service and make it harder to crack down on corporate abuses or implement other public protections and services.
7. **Will the right stop at curbing public workers rights?** Employers across the U.S. are demanding major concessions from private sector workers, and breaking unions. Right wing governors and state legislators are seeking new laws to restrict union rights for all private and public employees.
8. **Does everyone have a stake in this fight?** Yes. It's an old axiom that the rise in living standards for the middle class in the 1950s was the direct result of a record rate of unionization in America. It is of course unions that won the eight-hour day, weekends off, and many other standards all Americans take for granted that are now often threatened with the three-decade-long attack on unions spurred by that right wing icon Ronald Reagan. The corollary is that increased wages and guaranteed pensions put money into the economy, with a ripple effect that creates jobs and spurs the economy for all.

So it's time for all of us to say it loud:

- **No more cuts in public sector pay, pensions, or health benefits**
- **Balance budgets by closing corporate tax loopholes, restoring fair share taxes on corporations and wealthy individuals**
- **Guarantee retirement security and healthcare for all**

