



Speak up; speak loud

It's often been said that if a leader turns around and there is no one behind them, then he or she is just out for a walk. Hope Ohio Gov. John Kasich is enjoying his stroll.

In November, Ohio voters struck down a law that restricted public workers' rights to bargain collectively. The landslide defeat was a blow to Kasich and the anti-union, anti-worker, anti-middle-class agenda that began earlier this year in Wisconsin and quickly spread across the country.

Kasich's statement following the crushing defeat was anything but sincere: "The people have spoken clearly." Gosh, if it wasn't for the massive sea of protesters when the bill was first introduced and working its way through the state legislature and the nearly 1.3 million signatures to put the measure on the November ballot (more than five times the statutory requirement to bring the question to the voters), I might have actually bought the act. Nice try, governor. There's been nobody behind you for months.

But while words coming from Kasich are a little hard to digest, the statement in and of itself isn't: The people *have* spoken. Loud and clear.

And the people's message is this: Attacking a worker's right to bargain collectively is not what the American public wants to see. They are overwhelmingly against it and politicians like Kasich have gone too far.

The most disturbing thing about the agenda of Kasich and others is that it unfairly blames the hardworking men and women of this country for Wall Street's meltdown and the greed of the already über-wealthy. Seriously, it's your kid's fourth-grade teacher that is the problem? The snow plow operator? The firefighters and police who, day in and day out, risk their lives for your safety? These are the folks to blame? Get real.

Well, there are some other folks who need to get real—Congress.

Blaming letter carriers and other postal employees for the economic problems of the Postal Service for me is beyond disturbing. It's a slap in the face.

All letter carriers have done is gone about the business of delivering mail, binding this nation together, in the most professional and trustworthy way we know how. We have been voted the most trusted federal employees for the sixth year in a row. We put our customers first. Always.

We selflessly conduct the world's largest one-day food drive. We watch out for the elderly. We give to charity. We are engaged in our communities. Many of our rank-and-file have served our country in the armed forces. And, more often than not, we risk our lives to save others without a second thought.

Seriously, it's the hardworking men and women who put on their letter carrier uniform and deliver this nation's mail that are the problem? Well, according to some of the 13 pieces of legislation currently in Congress dealing with the Postal Service's financial problem, some members of Congress are saying just that. According to them, the only way to save the Postal Service is to cut delivery frequency, shut down post offices, lay off hundreds of thousands of workers, punish those who have been injured on the job, take away collective-bargaining rights, slash retirement benefits, and stop door-to-door delivery. Get real.

Congress created this mess with the mandate in 2006 to have the Postal Service pre-fund future retiree health benefits 75 years out in 10 years' time—to the tune of \$5.5 billion a year. Congress should fix it.

Parading out legislation that does nothing to deal with the true problem but instead punishes workers—and our customers by essentially killing the Postal Service—is unacceptable. They, too, have gone too far. I am a proud letter carrier and a proud union member. And neither I, nor any of you, are to blame for this mess—Congress is.

Let your voices be heard and tell Congress to look in the mirror and fix what it has broken. Demand the respect that you have earned. Make it save the Postal Service the right and fair and just way—not on the backs of the men and women who work there.

It's time for some of our elected members of Congress to get real, or enjoy their stroll. ☒