



Never forget

It was one year ago, as I write this article, that an injustice was done in Wisconsin. On March 9, 2011, in the dark of night and behind locked statehouse doors, Republican state senators in Wisconsin found a sneaky way to pass legislation that stripped the collective-bargaining rights of most of its state workers. At that moment, the war on unions and the collective-bargaining rights of workers everywhere had officially begun.

To this day, Gov. Scott Walker would like for you to believe that he was just a guy doing his job—an elected official thrown into a bad situation with no alternatives. But what Gov. Walker did one year ago and other governors have since done in states all across this country, with the backing of corporate billionaires, was premeditated and calculated and based on a lie.

If you need proof of the premeditation, consider this: Gov. Walker had waxed poetic to his cabinet members about how he believed that one of the most defining moments of President Ronald Reagan's political career was in 1987, when he fired more than 11,000 air traffic controllers who had gone out on strike asking for better wages and working conditions. Gov. Walker went on to say that this was their moment, their time to change the course of history.

If you need proof that it was based on a lie, go ahead and check this out: Gov. Walker said at the time that his decision to strip most state workers of their collective-bargaining rights had everything to do with the financial situation of the state of Wisconsin and its budget. But then he was later forced to admit, while under oath on a panel testifying in Congress, that the move had saved the state exactly zero dollars.

As letter carriers, we have been fighting the same lies and the same agenda. Rather than addressing the financial crisis within the Postal Service caused by the pre-funding mandate, Rep. Darrell Issa seeks to exploit the crisis to advance anti-worker ideological goals. Radically downsizing the government and gutting the collective-bargaining rights of hardworking postal employees appear to be Issa's main goals.

Gov. Walker was actually quoted recently as saying that the decision he made to strip the collective-bargaining rights of workers in Wisconsin was courageous. There is nothing courageous about blaming the hardworking people of this country for the mess that Wall Street created. There is nothing courageous about attacking a worker's basic right to collectively bargain. It's shameful and it's wrong.

As Gov. Walker now faces the recall efforts in Wisconsin (millions of signatures have already been collected—exceeding the total number of signatures required for a recall election by 460,000—and were being counted and verified as of the writing of this article), elected officials there are still trying to play games.

On March 6, the Wisconsin state assembly voted 60-37 to amend the state constitution to make it more difficult to recall an official from office. As of the writing of this article, the measure still needed to pass the Senate and then both houses of the legislature and then be approved by a statewide vote before being added to the state constitution. But it's just another attempt to silence the wishes of the citizens of Wisconsin—the very people those proposing the constitutional change were elected to represent.

It's time for Gov. Walker to go and take his union-busting, anti-worker, anti-middle-class agenda with him. And it's time for others with the same agenda go with him.

I hope that the citizens of Wisconsin give Gov. Walker his walking papers—it would be democracy at its finest. I also hope that workers everywhere remember what is at stake when they go to the polls this fall.

It's time to stand together and fight for what we believe in. There is no greater force for fairness, dignity and democracy in the workplace than a union. There is no greater force for fairness, dignity and democracy in our country than the labor movement.

Our opponents are counting on us to have amnesia. But we must never forget. 