

## What's really at Stake for Unions in America?

By: Paul Krausett

Is it the welfare of Joe and his family on Elm Street? Is it Gladys and her role in teaching our children? Is it Sam and Rebecca, neighbors who are employed as civil servants?

No – it's all about money, and a whole lot of it that winds up in the hands and ultimate control of a very few!



Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker addresses his Senate with all Democrats on the run.

Mandatory union contributions inherent with employment can run as much as \$1000 to \$2000 a year for thousands of households nationwide. When this money leaves the union member's hands, a great deal of it winds up in the control of a small number of state and national union leaders with little or no consent or oversight by members at large.

How much money? Follow some hypothetical arithmetic for an imaginary national union:

Local Dues	\$75 Month	\$75 Month	\$75 Month
#Members	5 Million	10 Million	15 Million
Monthly Total	\$375 Million	\$750 Million	\$1.125 Billion
Annual Total	\$4.5 Billion	\$9 Billion	\$13.5 Billion
35% to National	<u>\$1.575 Billion</u>	<u>\$3.15 Billion</u>	<u>\$4.725 Billion</u>

This enormous amount of money would provide this theoretical union with the most powerful political financial strength in America to influence politics. In addition to union dues, members of this union would frequently be obligated to make further contributions to a city's, county state or a federal political candidate's campaign fund, regardless of their voting choice or political affiliation. There's no question that unions similar to this, for years have decided many state and federal elections in our nation dating all the way back to John F. Kennedy and further.

A few men in smoky backrooms, armed with millions of dollars and the support and protection of legislators who owe their office to union involvement have controlled state and federal legislation, the workplace and its effect on the majority of our state and national economy for generations.

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governor of Wisconsin is drama likely to be replayed in other budget-challenged states during the next few months and may determine whether American unions rebound or become a fading fixture of the past.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, 44 states and Puerto Rico have introduced legislation governing labor unions and collective bargaining.

In New York City, the No. 2 guy in the fire department retired on a pension worth \$242,000 a year. In New York State, a single official holding two jobs and one pension took in \$641,000. A lieutenant with the Port Authority police retired with an annual pension of \$196,767, and 738 of the city's teachers, principals and such have pensions worth more than \$100,000 a year. Their former employers, it goes almost without saying, are steamed.

These examples of pension obesity were culled from the local newspapers, which never fail to shock with revelations of how good life is for those who once worked for the city, the state or any one of several public agencies. In some cases, retirement came a mere 20 or so years after first reporting to the job, and if they were lucky enough to fake a disability – there were virtually no limit to payments. Fully one-third of all New York City cops who retired during a recent 17-month period did so, on disability.

All though Governor Scott Walker of Wisconsin has exempted police officers and firefighters from his new legislation, it is clear that his intentions are to cripple government worker unions in Wisconsin and become the champion of the common man. The Middle Americans personifying the feeling of resentment and anger toward government workers who have so gamed the system that some of them retire on larger stipends than the average citizen makes in salary - and with greater and less expensive health care.

Gov. Walker has tapped into a feeling of disgust - that always-dangerous sense that the vast majority of workers in America have played by the rules and saved for their modest retirements, while government workers, on everyone else's dime, have run off with pensions they do not deserve. Millions in Wisconsin and across America now, feel they have been played for fools.

However, the unions will not surrender easily, if ever. There's too much money and political clout at risk. Union members will continue to exert their pressure on serving legislators and pour into streets in righteous anger in attempts to save and protect their individual hierarchy and lofty status in the workplace.

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