



**TO:** JOINT COUNCIL AND LOCAL UNION PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

**FROM:** JAMES P. HOFFA  
GENERAL PRESIDENT

**DATE:** MARCH 10, 2011

**RE:** WISCONSIN UPDATE

In light of events in Wisconsin over the last two days, I wanted to provide an update on the ongoing efforts in Madison and throughout the state.

Last night, Gov. Scott Walker and Republican leaders proceeded to enact their plan to destroy unions in the state of Wisconsin. While the Democratic Senate caucus remained out of state to prevent Republicans from passing Walker's initial budget adjustment bill, Republican leaders separated the financial components of the proposal and moved forward with the union-busting language.

Following a joint legislative committee hearing yesterday that lasted just six minutes and with little debate, Republicans moved a bill to the full Senate. It included the following provisions: elimination of public sector collective bargaining; termination of employees who are absent without approval or who participate in organized actions to stop work; annual votes to allow unions to remain certified as representatives of a unit; prohibition of payroll deduction for union dues; and, Right-to-Work (for Less) for public employees; repeal of interest arbitration for settling contracts; elimination of requirements that State departments determine that savings outweigh the costs of subcontracting work performed by public employees and forced certain public employees to start paying one half of the cost of their pension benefits and eliminating any requirements that disputes over the dismissals of public employees be decided by neutral arbitrators or other decision makers.

In the Senate, the measure was approved by an 18-1 margin with no Democratic Senators present. Only one Republican Senator – Dale Schultz – stood up for working families and opposed the bill. The full Assembly will be passing the measure today. In less than 30 minutes, Governor Walker and the Republican leadership summarily destroyed more than 50 years of workers' rights in Wisconsin.

Despite the events of this week, I can assure you that we will continue to fight this war. Last night's joint committee meeting violated the state's Open Meetings requirements as adequate notice of the meeting was not given. This afternoon, the

Dane County, WI district attorney will be seeking an order forcing the Legislature to re-do the process in accordance with state law.

More importantly, efforts are already underway to recall the seven Republican senators who voted for this egregious legislation and can be recalled because they were elected in 2008, and I am encouraging our Wisconsin members to actively participate in these efforts. Additionally, the Teamsters Union is eagerly counting down the days to a recall of Governor Walker. Under Wisconsin state law, elected officials must be in office for at least one year before being subject to recall efforts, and the governor has been in office fewer than three months.

As these attacks on workers continue, we will continue to keep you updated and aware of the situation and how best you can be of assistance.

Thank you.