



The New Frankenstein: Public Employee Unions

Judging from the behavior of public employee union members in Wisconsin, they believe they have the right to dictate to the government what their benefits ought to be and dictate to the taxpayer how much they should be paid. And if they don't get what they want, they will vandalize the state Capitol and send death threats to those legislators who voted to curtail their power.



Government employee union members instead of acting like public servants, now believe they are the public's masters. They have become modern-day Frankensteins who want to control the government and force the taxpayer to do their bidding — or else.

There was a time when working for the government was considered a privilege. Your job was to serve the public and to take pride in the service you performed. In return you had job security, good salaries, and paid vacations. You respected the government that hired you, and respected the taxpayers who paid your salary.

But unionization suddenly gave them power to become little dictators. Instead of serving the public, they expected the public to serve them by giving them benefits and pensions that no one in the private sector gets. And if the government or the taxpayers didn't give them what they wanted, they would desert their classrooms and fire stations and offices and create howling Third-World mobs in the state Capitol, threatening legislators, picketing their homes, and sending them death threats.

That's what unionization has done. It's created a monster that respects no one but those who agree with them. They want the governor to be their pawn, the legislators to be their lap dogs, and the public to shut up and pay up. They are asserting their power as if democratic processes have no meaning for them. They don't care what the voters want. The voters be damned. The voters are supposed to tremble in fear before the mighty union of public employees.

And that is why public employee unions must be abolished. They have been turned into the shock troops for socialism in which the "workers" control everything. Their aim is to overthrow (or exploit) the democratic process and create their own little dictatorship of the proletariat.

They have become the most subversive element in our society and must be stopped. If not, then they will rule over us and determine how our state and municipal governments should be run — for their benefit. In fact, although state and local public employees only represent 15 percent of the U.S. work force, they own more than a third of the nation's \$9.3 trillion in pension assets. In other words they have become experts at bilking the taxpayer, and are now screaming because their power is being challenged.

As we all know, many of the soft jobs in municipal and state bureaucracies are held by relatives and



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friends of politicians who rely on union financial support at election time. Many unions provide phone banks, literature, and door-to-door canvassing for their favorite candidates. This is the kind of organized corruption that now exists in state and local governments throughout the United States.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees was the biggest outside spender in the 2010 elections, ahead of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO and a flock of new Republican groups in campaign spending.

The 1.6 million-member AFSCME spent a total of \$87.5 million on the elections after tapping into a \$16 million emergency account to help fortify the Democrats' hold on Congress. The group spent money on television ads, phone calls, campaign mailings and other political efforts. "We're the big dog," said Larry Scanlon, the head of AFSCME's political operations. "But we don't like to brag."

But the Tea Party movement proved that the American people have more clout in the voting booth than Mr. Scanlon's big dog.

In addition to AFSCME's \$87.5 million spent in behalf of Democratic candidates, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), notorious for its intimidating thugs, spent \$65 million, and the National Education Association spent \$40 million. Using union dues to back a particular party's candidates clearly creates a conflict of interest between the public employee's impartiality and their efforts to dominate the political process.

The only way to stop this kind of corruption of the political system is to de-unionize public employees. Unions were first created in the private sector to prevent employers from exploiting their employees. But public employees were never exploited by the municipal and state governments that employed them. A so-called government job was the envy of the work force. It usually meant easy work, decent pay, and generous benefits.

Now it is the public employee unions that are exploiting the taxpayer, demanding more and more benefits and salary increases to the extent that states and municipal governments have gone broke trying to satisfy union demands. And when governments attempt to reign in the unions, they are vilified, spat on, and threatened with violence.

The idea of public employees mobbing the state Capitol and threatening legislators is totally contrary to civil government in a constitutional republic. In communist countries like Cuba, such behavior would be severely punished. However, in our free society public union members can behave like totalitarians and get away with it. The modest curtailment of their bargaining power by the governor of Wisconsin is seen as the greatest injustice ever inflicted on these ungrateful workers.

But if American taxpayers have any sense, they will recognize that they have a monster running loose in their state and local governments that needs to be eliminated. No state or local government can guarantee impartial government service if its unionized employees are wedded to a particular political party. Conservatives should make no secret of their aim to de-unionize public employees. The mobs in Madison, Wisconsin, have made it abundantly clear that a terrible mistake was made when the legislature voted to permit public employees to unionize.

According to an elucidating article by Amy H. Laff in the Statebrief Blog, there were no unions for government workers before the 1950s. Public-sector employees willingly accepted a little less pay than their private-sector equivalents. They did so because of an interest in public service, job security and reasonable benefits.



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But that changed in the late fifties, when for purely political reasons, New York City Mayor Robert Wagner signed an executive order authorizing public employees to unionize. His action was soon followed by other local and state Democrat legislators around the country..

In 1962, as payback to the unions who helped him win the election, President John F. Kennedy granted federal employees the right to collectively bargain. Since then, public sector union membership has skyrocketed while, in the private sector, unions have fallen out of favor.

The historical basis for unionization was so that workers could receive a larger share of a company's profits. But that reasoning is nonsensical when applied to public service. Governments don't make profits; they simply assess and collect taxes.

Meanwhile, public sector unions have gained more and more political power by supporting the Democratic party, which guarantees raised salaries and benefits. The connection between the unions and the politicians has become downright incestuous.

In 2009 government salaries jumped 2.4 percent, approximately twice the increase earned by private sector employees. In fact, the average salary of a federal worker is now \$71,000, about \$22,000 more than the average private sector employee. And since the election of Obama, the number of federal employees making over \$150,000 a year has more than doubled to over 10,000.

All of the lucrative pension plans negotiated by the public unions are proving to be financially untenable. Many plans allow workers to retire at age 55 at around their full salary in their final years of employment, with inflation adjustments as well as lifetime free health care.

The National Healthcare bill rammed through Congress as well as the \$800 billion stimulus bill contained payoffs to public sector unions. And while the private sector has shed 7,000,000 jobs since the recession began, the number of public sector jobs has risen every month.

To sum it all up, the Doug Ross Journal Blog writes: "Public sector unions are killing our economic system and the American taxpayer. The debt unleashed by their outrageous benefit plans simply cannot be paid. The union bosses have lied to their members about lifetime benefits and they have betrayed the American people. Public sector unions must be disbanded and outlawed before our country resembles Greece, Spain and other European countries that are teetering on the brink of destruction, thanks to unions just like ours."

Getting rid of public sector unions should be one of the central aims of the Tea Party movement. It's a much needed call to action which will do much to lower the cost of government on federal, state, and local levels. We must not permit public employees to dictate what the taxpayers must support.

Finally, it was a letter from liberal President Franklin D. Roosevelt, written in August 1937, that argued why unionization of public employees was a bad idea. It should be read by today's liberal Democrats. It was a bad idea in 1937, and is still a bad idea. He wrote:

All Government employees should realize that the process of collective bargaining, as usually understood, cannot be transplanted into the public service. It has its distinct and insurmountable limitations when applied to public personnel management.

The very nature and purposes of Government make it impossible for administrative officials to represent fully or to bind the employer in mutual discussions with Government employee organizations.

Particularly, I want to emphasize my conviction that militant tactics have no place in the functions



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of any organization of Government employees. A strike of public employees manifests nothing less than an intent on their part to prevent or obstruct the operations of Government until their demands are satisfied. Such action, looking toward the paralysis of Government by those who have sworn to support it, is unthinkable and intolerable.

The truth of that statement was well demonstrated in Madison, Wisconsin.



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