



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 18, 2011

National Guard May Deploy as Socialists, Unions Wreak Havoc in Wisconsin

The protests have become so intense — police [estimated](#) the number of demonstrators at around 25,000 — that Republican Gov. Scott Walker [said](#) he could be forced to call out the state's National Guard to quell the disorder and keep certain state functions such as the prison system functioning. At least nine protestors had been arrested by Thursday afternoon, state officials [reported](#).

Democrat lawmakers have [fled the state](#) in an effort to delay the proposals, prompting strong and swift Republican criticism. A vote cannot take place in the Senate unless at least one Democrat is present, and right now, all of them are reportedly waiting in Illinois.



Gov. Walker [urged](#) the missing legislators to quit their "stunt" and "do the job they're paid to do." Other Republican leaders suggested law enforcement should bring the legislators to work if they were still within state borders.

The rabid activists swarming the capitol in Madison were caught vandalizing property, distributing subversive literature, putting fear into innocents, pounding on legislators' doors and windows, shouting, and furiously banging drums, according to witnesses. Some of the protestors were [videotaped](#) carrying signs comparing Governor Walker to Hitler, Mussolini, and deposed Egyptian despot Hosni Mubarak. Other more violent placards featured him with gun crosshairs trained on his face. One sign likened budget cuts to rape. And the mob [left behind](#) mountains of trash in its wake.

Among the flyers being distributed was one from the World Socialist website entitled "[Unite workers and youth to defeat Wisconsin budget cuts](#)." Produced by the Socialist Equality Party and International Students for Social Equality, the document urged protestors to use the demonstration in Wisconsin as "the starting point for a mass movement."

Claiming that the "economic and political system has failed," the groups exhorted demonstrators to reject both parties, create "independent" committees of students and workers, nationalize corporations, seize the wealth, and usher in socialism. "The capitalist system has failed and must be replaced with a new type of society based on social need," the flyer stated, promoting the transformation of businesses into "publicly owned and democratically controlled entities."

Another flyer from the protests obtained by *The New American*, headlined "Collective Bargaining is a MUST!" called for higher taxes on corporations and "the rich." It proposed a series of new taxes and tax increases to balance the state budget, urging readers to visit socialistworker.org for more information and updates.



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People who have been following the demonstrations closely reported that Madison was a chaotic scene. "The place is under siege by union thugs, rent-a-mobs, and high schools kids let out of school because the teachers have abandoned their posts," explained *The New American* magazine's Ann Shibler, who has received continuous updates on the protest as it developed from sources within the Capitol.

"That beautiful and recently restored building has been trashed. Bands of thugs are roaming the halls, blockading restrooms, stairwells, and elevators," she said. "They scream and yell, bang drums, and run around with clenched fists, banging on the windows and doors of the locked legislators' offices."

She also said students were being used for political purposes and that "thugs" had been bussed in from Illinois. "Keep in mind the majority of these thugs are teachers, who are teaching impressionable children," she said, noting that Gov. Walker should have called in the National Guard already to prevent the "teachers' union mobocracy" from overrunning the capitol. "I would also fire every teacher that abandoned their post over this across the state."

A State Senate staff member reported similar lunacy at the Capitol over the three days of protests. "The police have advised that we lock our doors," said staffer Jolene Churchill in an e-mail Thursday. "Groups of young kids are marching through the halls yelling at the top of their lungs," she explained, noting that drums were banging, restrooms and elevators were blockaded, and that there had been vandalism on Wednesday.

"Angry crowds are pounding on our glass windows," she reported. "Please, please pray for our state."

Despite the fear, chaos and damage they inflicted, organizers and protest leaders were quite happy with the demonstrations. "I have never been prouder of our movement than I am at this moment," Wisconsin AFL-CIO [President Phil Neuenfeldt told](#) the crowd.

The legislation that prompted the outburst would force many state employees to contribute more to their pensions and health benefits. It would also prohibit most government workers from collectively demanding higher salaries above the Consumer Price Index, stop unions from forcing public employees to pay dues, and more. The proposals would also cut spending in an effort to rein in the state's massive budget deficit.

Former "community organizer" and current President Barack Obama [jumped into the fray](#) on Wednesday, too. In an interview with a Wisconsin television station, he said the measures seemed like "an assault on unions." Obama urged viewers not to blame government employees for all the budget problems. "I think it is very important for us to understand that public employees, they're our neighbors, they're our friends. These are folks who are teachers and they're firefighters and they're social workers and they're police officers."

The protests were organized by government-union bosses, the Democratic National Committee's Organizing for America, and a coalition of socialist groups. But despite the size and ferocity of the protests, the Governor said he has received thousands of e-mails on the subject, most supporting his plan. Very few Republicans have wavered in their support for the proposals, and with recent electoral gains, the party can pass the legislation without support from Democrats — assuming the run-away lawmakers come back to the Capitol and allow a vote to take place.

Some analysts predict the chaos in Wisconsin is a [foreshadowing of a broader conflict](#) that will soon paralyze states across the nation. Bloomberg reported that several thousand government employees converged on the Ohio state capitol to battle similar measures. Tea Partiers also showed up [to support loosening the grip of government unions](#).



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State governments across America are wrestling with massive budget deficits and unfunded pension liabilities that threaten to bankrupt their treasuries. Numerous Governors have already started the process of reducing state-employee pensions and benefits in states from New Jersey to Florida. Municipalities and local governments are facing similar scenarios, so observers expect the battle to intensify before the problems are resolved.

Photo: AP Images

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