



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
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Union Herald Article from the desk of:

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RIGHT TO WORK WATCH: ITS OVER

I was right. Normally I would be happy in that pronouncement...with this, not so much. By the time you read this article, Right to Work in Wisconsin will be law. As predicted, this was introduced and rammed through the legislature in record time, with limited public input and the outcome a foregone, even preannounced, conclusion. Governor Walker has announced that of course he would sign this, which certainly should not be a surprise to anyone.

I listened to all of the debate in the Senate, 8 full hours of us versus them (although they didn't have a lot to say), knowing full well that no amendment, regardless of the value of the suggested change would be allowed by our Republican friends. In the end, only one Republican, Senator Jerry Petrowski of Marathon, voted against this, questioning the validity of its promises saying he was "not convinced that the supposed benefits of passing this bill will materialize and offset a potentially disruptive impact on our economy" in a statement released after the vote. I would suggest you send Senator Petrowski a thank you for having the courage to cast this vote, as I did just this morning. As this article is being completed before the Assembly acts, I urge you to take the time to check out how the members cast their votes and thank any who support our call for rejection, regardless of their political party.

So now we move forward. There is much uncertainty about the requirements of this law and the constraints it places on employees and employers alike. Taking up and passing a piece of legislation that changes decades of labor practice at such lightning speed guarantees there will be much confusion for quite some time to come.

We will survive this. Wisconsin is the 25th state to adopt Right to Work, a tipping point to be sure. But Unions have dealt with, survived, and thrived in states with RTW for decades, and we will do the same. In the immediate term, the challenges will be difficult,

the hurdles hard to overcome. No doubt we will fall down and land hard. There should also be no doubt we will stand back up and march forward, with more determination and focus than we have ever had before. Now...onto the soap box.

We need to start by taking a long look at ourselves, my fellow union members. In the last go round, Governor Walker received the votes of 48% of union households, 38% of union members themselves. Republicans gained seats, solidifying their control of the legislature, virtually guaranteeing that we would see what we are seeing now. Right to Work is but one piece of the pie, one part of a massive shift in the culture of this state (and this nation). Right to Work legislation has nothing to do with the competitiveness of our state, or freedom for workers. It has everything to do with silencing the opposition, regardless of the source. It is about the disenfranchisement of those who challenge the right wing running roughshod over this state. That those issuing the challenge today are unionized men and women is of no matter.

Take a look at what is happening not just to you but to everyone and everything around you. The poor, the unemployed, educators and their students, public employees, senior citizens, our University system, our natural resource advocates, public radio and television, our judicial system, the public's resources including our state parks, waterways, land stewardship...all under assault through wholesale changes to longstanding systems. Defunding or reducing resources to the point of tacit closure. Insulting those in need of public assistance by seeking compulsory drug testing, disguised in the premise of wanting to help. The oppression of those who wish to vote, because statistically those we discourage don't vote the "right" way. This is what is happening, the direction we are heading in. They are winning, and we are helping them do so through our votes, whether that vote is cast for them or not cast at all.

No it's not just about you, or me, or Unions. We need to get past the selfishness of our own perspective. It is about everything that we, together, should hold dear. Just because something does not directly impact you doesn't mean it does not impact you at all.

We are only so many degrees of separation away from each other. You are only one event away from being in someone else's place; somewhere that you may never have thought you would be. We ignore that place, the place of others, at our own peril. Just because you may be employed in a Union shop with a decent living wage doesn't mean we can just ignore those who may not be so lucky, who may be unemployed, under employed, or even unemployable. Just because you may enjoy life in a small town, or even in the rolling country of Western Wisconsin, does not mean we do not need to understand the issues of the inner city. You don't need to have experienced the curse of addiction to feel compassion for those so afflicted, or those who are surrounded by it every day. You may not have an issue at the voting booth, but we need to understand that those who do have the right to vote anyway; this is America, voting should be sacred. You may not attend the University, or listen to public radio, or visit our state parks. You may not be a senior citizen needing assistance to buy medication, or a hard working young person with a family that still cannot afford health insurance or child care. But chances are someone close to you does need, does suffer, does experience, does find

some of these things important in their lives, and those things are as important to them as anything that is important to you.

So yes, now we move forward. Everything we must do starts with us, in our own homes, our own shops, in our own Local Lodge. But we will never secure what we desire for ourselves, particularly now, if we do not expand our horizon to include what is desired, needed, by others. If we continue to ignore each other, if we can see nothing beyond our own place in life, we may well lose the privilege of that place. We did not arrive here on our own. This place was handed to us by those who came before us, who built not just this Union but this Country, this Society. They came together and did this for each other, building a middle class that has been the envy of the world. Always a battle, always a challenge, always fought against by those who ultimately benefit from it the most, for the riches of this country always move towards the top. We just stand together to fight for some fairer share. Let us continue to do so, but it is time again to expand the fight to everyone's needs, the issues of all those being held down or held back regardless of the cause. If we do so we can truly begin the process of rebuilding our Union. Those in society who would hold us down, all of us, build on the backs of others. In order for us to succeed, we must build by standing on each other's shoulders.

I apologize for predicting this correctly. Never before have I wished more to have been wrong.

Postscript: Governor Walker asserts that if he can handle 100,000 protesters in Madison, he can do the same across the world. That would be funny if it wasn't so scary. Newsflash Napoleon, 100,000 peaceful protesters does not equal terrorists who chop off people's heads to make a point. I think we have identified with whom we need to start drug testing...

STOP THE TPP FAST TRACK

Now is the time to contact your Legislators in Washington to urge them to reject fast track authority for the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. We can see where complacency in dealing with our elected officials gets us; nowhere. Write the letter, send the email, make the call...however you choose to communicate with your legislator, make sure you send the message to stop this corporate give away. Stop TPP! The following information is from goiam.org.

The IAM joins labor in bringing the secretly-negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement out from the shadows. TPP is poised to become the biggest free trade agreement since NAFTA. Like the deeply-flawed NAFTA, TPP promises job growth – but will instead export thousands of U.S. jobs to low-wage countries. The trade agreement, currently being negotiated by nearly a dozen countries including the U.S., also threatens key labor, health, safety and environmental standards

Facts about Fast Track

It Costs Jobs: Trade policies adopted under Fast Track have cost us more than 1 million jobs

and contributed to the shuttering of more than 60,000 factories. It Benefits the 1%: Fast Track ensures trade policies are made by and for multinational corporations and the wealthy, making income distribution even more unequal and making it harder to get a raise. It Undermines Democracy: Fast Track doesn't allow adequate public scrutiny of trade deals while they are being negotiated, and permits only a simple up-or-down vote—no amendments. It Gives Power to Foreign Corporations That Invest in the United States: Fasttracked trade deals almost always give mind-boggling legal rights and privileges to foreign investors—rights and privileges home-grown U.S. businesses don't even have. It Prevents Amendments: Fast Track doesn't allow our representatives to amend trade deals, no matter how problematic some provisions might be. If Permits Foreign Currency Manipulation: Current Fast Track legislation doesn't require trade agreements to contain adequate provisions addressing currency manipulation, which economists estimate has cost up to 5 million U.S. jobs. It Neglects Jobs: The current Fast Track legislation doesn't include negotiating objectives on job creation, reducing the trade deficit or protecting "Buy American" policies. In fact, it promotes offshoring of jobs through "global value chains." It Encourages Higher Drug Prices: The current Fast Track legislation includes objectives that empower foreign drugmakers to challenge drug pricing and preferences in programs like Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE—raising costs for these programs, patients and all American taxpayers. It also could delay when generics come onto the market, raising drug prices for all of us. It Hurts the Environment: Previous trade deals negotiated under Fast Track have weakened environmental protections. Lastly, it Harms Communities: Fast-tracked trade agreements have shut factories and devastated communities—harming even those who still have jobs by forcing cutbacks in such important public services as schools, libraries, road repair, and police and fire protection.

Free Trade is not Fair Trade. These agreements do not serve the interests of the majority of working men and women in this country. Contact Congressman Kind by mail to his local office, 205 5th Ave. S in La Crosse WI, 54601; by Fax to 608-782-4588 and 202-225-5739; and **by email THROUGH HIS WEBSITE AT www.kind.house.gov**

District Lodge 66

Your District 66 Delegates came together for our regular meeting on Monday February 16. In addition to the regular business of the Lodge, the Delegates voted to make a number of expenditures including a donation to Local Lodge 219, District 711 whose members have been on strike for a number of months. We also made a donation to the La Crosse Youth Enrichment Association and agreed to invest in an Audio Visual Conferencing System for the office. We will also be sending Neil Kamrowski, Local Lodge 1030, as our DL 66 representative to the TPP conference to be held in Washington DC on March 4th. **PLEASE LOOK FOR YOUR APRIL UNION HERALD AS THERE WILL BE AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING THE FUTURE OF OUR DISTRICT.**

Spring is just around the corner and with it comes the promise of new beginnings, new life...until next month.