

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Whatever goodwill there was on September 11, 2001, is gone

So says a line in a recent report Blitzkrieg 2011 at Policepay.net. How true it is.

They also report that “coast to coast and border to border” it has been a constant state of hell for police, firefighters, and other public sector workers. You know this from watching the news. Both left leaning loons and far right whacko pundits have reported on the angry “mobs” if you’re on the right, or angry “employees” if you’re on the left, packing the state capitals in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, and others. Like in New Jersey, whose governor, under get tough politics, seemingly demonizes our brother and sister workers as he changes the face of collective bargaining in the Land of Snooki.

The red supporters just drone over this governor as the “Great Mayor of Hope” to fix all that is wrong in government. He is even being touted for president if he can get his large frame in the mood for a presidential run.

He’s a big guy—maybe not as hefty as President Taft in the early part of the 20th Century, but big enough to shake the halls of government with his anti-union endeavors. If you read his legislative agenda, those of you involved in labor will just shake your head in dismay. This is the guy we want as president? He has taken his stand and it is not with labor.

And then there is Ohio, with that governor’s complete eradication of collective bargaining. Then Iowa, Kansas, Nevada, and Washington, where various bills passed and promoted would gut so much for labor, from arbitration to bargaining to unions. Sad, just sad.

And the biggest loser = Wisconsin, where the nightly talking points commentators tout that it is okay to repeal almost all (and I believe that someday soon it will be all) collective bargaining rights of public employees. Yes, the left leaning pundits have given us hope with established attempts at recall processes for those who have trampled our workers’ rights, but the right has a big spin base.

Republicans hope that as the furor dies down, they will win the battle by attrition. Democrats have vowed to keep up the fight. But not all on the blue are with us. In Illinois, some Democrats are straddling the middle. Some in the House would like to see all current public employees go to the pension system they promised would only be for new employees when they passed it. Our Senate leader says that would most likely be unconstitutional and appears not to be calling for the dismantling of our pensions.

While it seems like a friend speaking, we then learn this same Senate leader wants to tax pensions that up until now were not taxed by the State. So where ever you turn, they get more revenue one way or the other, and it’s not benefitting the police sector.

Then there is the new House Bill 3339, introduced by Rep. Elaine Nekritz - D that is quietly making its way through channels that will alter the way an unbiased arbitrator works if the employer doesn't like your arbitration award. Go ahead and look it up at <http://ilga.gov/>. It won't appear on the Bills and Resolution page; you have to type in the bill number.

Now I have been involved in hundreds of arbitration cases and as is the norm, just like Solomon, arbitrators typically "split the baby" over the long haul in their decision making. But government doesn't want a level playing field in labor or one that favors you. They want the whole "chalupa" and give you nothing. So this bill, if passed, will not only diminish the arbitration process, it will make it a crime if the union arbitrates in some instances. Are you kidding me?

Every state and local government screams financial insolvency, bankruptcy, and that the sky is falling. Lions and tigers and bears, oh my!

Well, they are all either not giving out the true facts because they are trusting them to get a gullible press and public on their side, or they are flat out lying. How do you really know what their financial health is? How many citizens or press people actually try to look into the hidden dimensions of the multiple universe that is local government? No, you only hear and read what you can put in a sound bite or a short newspaper article. The truth is demeaning to these people.

I have been ranting and raving that Republican governors and politicians are trying to trash public employee unions for years now. Along with me, others for sure, but here locally I don't see much from other organizations. They are too busy fighting with each other. I wish it would stop—but it won't because this public union pie is only so big. This is allowing these detestable governments to label all private and public sector unions as part of an evil cabal that just drains the life out of taxpayers.

Many buy into this, not ever asking government how much money they are actually going to get back if unions go the way of the dinosaur. Not a penny, I would say, not a penny. The silence from them on this is deafening.

We as organizations need to strive to get the word out to all of our members to organize and fight. And fight we must. As I've said many times before, it starts with you. Write, call, and fax. The link again is below. Let our politicians know in Illinois that we don't want Chris Christie or Scott Walker type thinking here. We want fairness. We want them to keep their promises and not trash our reputations.

Let them know that you cherish your job, our oaths, and our fair wages and promised pensions, too. Tell them we want our great state of Illinois to be a great state of Labor.

Tell them to be fair and to remember we are all still here, as we were on September 11, 2001. We are still heroes.

Stay safe. Vita e Bella

<http://www.elections.il.gov/DistrictLocator/DistrictOfficialSearchByAddress.aspx>