

## **A Few minutes with the Boss**

*By: Joseph Andalina*

### **Nothing is forever ...unless it turns out that way**

Keep that in mind because the attack on unions, collective bargaining, and your pensions will go the way of Wisconsin if you make the fundamental mistake that voters did in that great state by electing anti-union politicians into power.

Those in the “red” spectrum have fooled the people into thinking that “conservatism” means fiscal responsibility. And under that guise, they have promised to destroy unions and the money it uses to support those in the “blue” spectrum.

But do not believe those men behind the curtain. This is a continual power grab by those on the far right who are emboldened by the Republican victories in local, as well as in the Federal House of Representatives last year.

But just because folks had enough of Nancy Pelosi does not mean that they wanted collective bargaining rights dragged away. Just because they wanted massive spending bills and stimulus money giveaways stopped did not mean that they wanted their wages and pensions diminished along with the House cleaning.

Even the truth that a Republican president started this whole spending train did not derail the Republicans from using the current president’s spending plan as the culprit who is solely guilty for our national debt, which has now reached into state and local political sniping.

The plunge of approval ratings was for Congress as a whole and the aforementioned Ms. Pelosi, as recent elections have indicated. The anger was legitimate and the despair clear.

So the red merchants used this disconnect to sprint into power in many races and once empowered, used the “fiscal responsibility” coda to convince you that public sector employees receive lavish wages, terrific overtime benefits, (as one red pundit has written), holiday, sick time, pensions, and health care.

They forget about our lunch breaks! All those rabid anti-union pundits screaming about public sector workers and their benefits, while enjoying their hour-long lunches of filets, Cobb salads, and dirty martinis. Did they forget that without unions there would be no “free lunches?” That those who criticize us have a lunch hour because unions set the mark for a quiet interlude of dining for their members, as well as the rest of our free working society.

The fact of the matter is that even in full right-to-work states, unions set the mark for the wages the workers receive there, as well as in unionized venues. The bar is set for all workers everywhere because of union involvement to make a level playing field for labor with management.

The insincerity of those talking bobble heads of red is something to behold. Are there any left who are at least moderate in their thinking? While they can acknowledge that unions back

Democrats, can they also acknowledge that the rich, oil and big business back the Republicans? Sort of evens it out, doesn't it?

That's what this is really all about. Balanced budgets are the smoke in the smoke and mirror trick. Hide the mirror that is the power grab going on which is designed to cut unions funding to the Democrats. In some instances, they are turning public sector workers against each other.

Don't believe me? On two different telecasts; one red and one blue; bombastic pundits both indicated recently that public sector police and firemen are pretty much conservative. To each his own, but the proof starts in Wisconsin where police and fire guys backed the Republicans, but I'm sure they didn't support their government's efforts to destroy unions or their right to bargain.

I see that the union stripping bill exempts police and fire, and I would guess that they can guess that they are next after what has happened in the land of the Packers. Why should the Republicans stop at teachers? I saw fire and police signs on various videos and we have to uphold the law, but I believe they are seeing that some politicians will hurt them too in due time and there just may be some voters' remorse. Because when cops and firemen suffer the same fate as their fellow public sector workers, there will be no large union base to support them as there was last month in Wisconsin when various unions got together en masse to protest.

And, Republicans, if ultimately successful in the almost great white north, the politicians here in Illinois could do the same thing. After all, it was in our last general election for governor that the Republican, Mr. Brady, had a platform here in Illinois where one of his goals was to stop collective bargaining, chop pensions, and maybe put Karl Rove in charge. Either way, it could have been bad.

Brady lost. Quinn, while an unapologetic tax populist is the better choice. While he raised your taxes—he believes in labor. Not so with all Democrats, either, folks. Some would like to see your constitution aborted so they can change the pensions of all of you currently working the streets. For the most part, the “blue side” still supports labor.

But some on both sides will do what is expedient if it means trashing your careers so they can keep theirs. You will need to start doing your homework and know who is a true friend of labor and support them. Get informed, folks.

Your need to know “thine enemy” and let them know that you are watching. So check out our link below, contact your reps and tell them what you want to see in Illinois and what you don't. See if they respond to you and share their beliefs about labor in Illinois.

Cops and firemen specifically have to really think this through. Being “red” might be closer to your values and might be where you're comfortable, but “blue” will be better for your future employment health.

Stay safe. Vita e Bella—ancora!

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