

A Few minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

It ain't over 'til it's over

And that seems to be the case in Wisconsin where a judge recently struck down that state's controversial collective bargaining legislation. As I'm sure you all remember, Governor Walker and his minions by one vote basically, stripped his state employees and teachers of all their bargaining rights, or made them into a mishmash of any meaningful bargaining rights.

He exempted police officers and I believe fire, but everyone is smart enough to know that it would be just a matter of time where he would bounce a rock off of their skulls and take their rights away, too.

Maybe I'm wrong there. Maybe the law enforcement community in Wisconsin loves Walker and believes he would maintain their rights. I'm not from Wisconsin and therefore choose to be open-minded as far as the police are concerned. But from the protests that were well publicized about the union-stopping bill and seeing politicians at their best rolling over unions and unions rights I would bet in the long term that this legislation would probably affect all state employees.

I have heard it parroted in Illinois that Walker's legislation should happen here, so it could have wide-reaching influence. It is obvious that state governments in Wisconsin, Illinois, and others seem to have a bone to pick with teachers and state workers.

The rest of us should be very much aware of this and maintain support for our brothers and sisters in other union groups. As in all aspects of life, ward off the notion that "it can't happen to us!"

Anyway, the Wisconsin judge ruled that Walker's law violated union members' free speech, association and equal rights protection rights in both State and United States constitutions. Of course, the governor screamed foul and that a "liberal and activist judge" wants to take away his lawmaking power. Look up the ruling for details.

In reality it's tough to say what the impact will be, other than the ruling will be appealed by the governor to a higher court. The unions are now demanding that collective bargaining negotiations begin after this ruling while the legislature asks the appellate court to stay the ruling until further appeals are made.

Whatever may come down, it is a victory for the unions at a time when a victory was needed. In both here, in Wisconsin, and in many other state venues, union bashing is the norm. Demonize public workers, cops, and teachers is a shell game that state and municipalities hope to parlay into a power grab.

It's great to see that this judge can see through the smoke and mirror trick—at least for now.

Vita è bella