



On The Move

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Republican Extremists Seek to Strip Public Employee Unions of Political Influence over Matters of Importance to Local 234 Members

With an anti-union president in the White House and an anti-worker business tycoon about to become Secretary of Labor, Republicans in the Pennsylvania legislature are promoting a radical attack on public employees and their unions.

Last week, Republicans in the State Senate passed Senate Bill 166. A similar bill is working its ways through the republican controlled House. The purpose of Senate Bill 166 is to silence public employees and their unions so that anti-union politicians and anti-union legislation can become law without the least bit of public scrutiny regarding the effects such legislation would have on the lives of working families in Pennsylvania.

Senate Bill 166 would bar Local 234 and other public employee unions from making political contributions to pro-labor candidates for state and local office; deny the union the right to lobby for or against legislation introduced in Harrisburg; outlaw voter registration drives organized by the union; and, prevent the Local from participating in get out the vote drives. Senate Bill 166 would prevent public employee unions from engaging in any actions having a electoral, political or legislative purpose. Senate Bill 166 is without doubt one of the most sweeping attacks on labor in Pennsylvania history.

The Resistance is growing in Pennsylvania

This attack on the rights of workers shows that we are no longer dealing with the Old Republican Party that at least had some moderate, pro-worker representatives in the state legislature. Republicans in the state legislature have become ultra conservative and extremely anti-labor.

However, the labor movement is not taking this assault on workers' rights lying down.

Local 234 and the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO are lobbying legislators and Governor Wolf to defeat the House version Senate Bill 166. There are two ways this pro-corporate effort to emasculate the labor movement can be stopped in its tracks:

(1) The bill can be defeated in the House. Our representatives in Harrisburg report that the House vote will be much closer than the vote in the State Senate. Indeed, there are indications that the bill will lose some Republican support and be defeated in the House. If that happens the threat is over---at least for now. If the House passes the bill then;

(2) Governor Wolf can veto it and force a vote in both chambers to override his veto. While the Republicans may get Senate and House majorities to send the bill to the Governor's

desk, a veto override is a different matter. It takes a *two-thirds majority* in both the House and Senate to override the Governor's veto---no easy task under the best of circumstances.

A Veto Override is Very Difficult

In the House, the Democrats control 81 seats, while the Republicans control 121 seats (with one seat vacant). To get the two-thirds majority needed to override Governor Wolf's veto, Republicans would need 134 votes---meaning they would have to get 13 democrats to vote for the bill, which is highly unlikely. In the State Senate, Republicans have 34 seats compared to 16 seats held by Democrats. A two-thirds majority in the Senate requires 34 votes. If it were up to the Senate alone, we'd be in big trouble.

TWU members can join the fight by contacting their state representatives, especially republican representatives. Given the current republican domination of the state legislature, labor clearly needs to shift the balance of power in Harrisburg if we want to see legislation passed that is favorable to working people, rather than the anti-union garbage we are dealing with now.

Trump's U.S. Supreme Court Nominee Poses Grave Threat for Public Employees

Donald Trump, who campaigned for President as a champion of working-class people is proving to be anything but. Trump has nominated staunch anti-worker billionaires and his political cronies to virtually every cabinet position affecting working class people. Trump's Secretary of Labor is notorious for exploiting workers in the restaurant industry with low wages and no benefits. He is also strongly opposed to unions, increasing the minimum wage and worker safety. Trump's pick for Attorney General, Jeff Sessions, has spent his entire career fighting against civil rights and voting rights. As Attorney General, Sessions can ignore the law and set back civil and voting rights back decades, all of which weakens working people and protects the interests of the rich.

In addition, Trump has nominated a staunch anti-worker conservative judge to the U.S. Supreme Court. Here's why this is important for our members and other public employees.

In March, 2016, the Supreme Court split 4-4 in favor of labor in a case filed on behalf of a few school teachers. The law would have undermined public employees by eliminating the dues check-off system in the public sector. While the plaintiffs in that lawsuit were teachers, the most rabidly anti-union power brokers in the country put big money behind the suit. These anti-union activists want to keep wages low and silence the voice of organized labor in the political arena.

The death of conservative Justice Anton Scalia in February, 2016, led to the 4-4 split on the Supreme Court. Had Scalia remained on the bench, labor would have suffered a big setback. As we said back then, if Scalia's replacement is picked by a Republican president, the issue will come before the Court again and we'll be in big trouble. Unfortunately, that's exactly what has happened. Trump has given big business the fifth vote they need to cripple public sector unions. With friends like Donald Trump, working people don't need any enemies!

We Must and We Will