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Letters to the Editor
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The demonization of public employees in Wisconsin and across America is the latest demagogic tactic in the ongoing efforts to marginalize collective bargaining in America.

The severity of the budgetary woes facing federal, state and local governments is primarily a function of the meltdown of the capital markets in 2008 and the ensuing Great Recession. This meltdown was not caused by teachers, firefighters and police officers, but instead by the unscrupulous greed of certain financial institutions insufficiently constrained by public regulation or private ethics. And after many of the true malefactors of our economic meltdown were rewarded with bailouts, public employees, and unions generally, are now being scapegoated for partisan advantage.

Whether and to what extent public employees should contribute towards their health insurance or pensions are legitimate issues. What is not legitimate is the assertion advanced by Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker that his state's budgetary challenges require the permanent evisceration of collective bargaining for most public employees, irrespective of the amount of monetary concessions on their part. The fact that Governor Walker only weeks ago determined that Wisconsin could afford over \$100 million in corporate tax breaks shows beyond doubt that his my-way-or-the-highway stance is a thick slice of ideological baloney.

As the efforts to enact a phony "right-to-work" law in Missouri and many other states demonstrate, the current assault on the ability of workers to bargain is most assuredly not confined to public employees. Those business and conservative groups which have always refused to recognize the central role of collective bargaining in creating and maintaining the middle class in America are conducting an unprecedented attack on unions. That they are doing so only one year after the Supreme Court opened the floodgates for unlimited corporate contributions to influence elections is no coincidence. If and when the union busters and their corporate benefactors achieve their goal of crippling unions to the point of effectively

eliminating collective bargaining there will be no meaningful countervailing force to corporate power, either in workplaces or polling places. We can be sure that the ideologically extreme and lavishly funded anti-worker forces in America will not be satisfied until the ability of all American wage earners to negotiate for terms and conditions is the same as that possessed by the greeters at Wal-Mart. And at that point the wrecking ball will have been put to what's left of the American middle class.

Sincerely,



CARY HAMMOND

CH/clm