

The **North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation (NDSG)** is a diverse, national network of progressive educators dedicated to advocacy for useful, fair, and democratic ways to document and assess children's learning.

Website: <http://www.ndsg.org>

## **Madison, Wisconsin Civil Action Fact Sheet**

*In the spirit of inquiry and an educated democratic citizenry, members of the North Dakota Study Group have created this fact sheet in order to assist in understanding what is happening in Madison, Wisconsin.*

### **Why are people gathering in Madison, Wisconsin?**

Citizens are Responding to Governor Walker's proposed Senate Bill 11, referred to as "Budget Adjustment Bill" or "Budget Repair Bill."

### **What are some of Governor Walker's proposals?**

- Employees will pay more toward their pension fund
- Employees will pay higher insurance premiums
- Collective bargaining for teachers, home health care workers, family child care workers, and everyone except fire fighters and police will be terminated
- Union dues will not be automatically deducted from paychecks
- Union members must sign up to the union every year

The police and fire fighters are supporting their fellow unionists.

### **Why are people marching against this bill?**

- Teachers and other public workers are marching because the governor's bill removes collective bargaining rights for many public employees.
  - Collective Bargaining is the process by which employers and employees negotiate working conditions and compensation. It is used in both public **and** private work relationships. Collective bargaining is a democratic approach to insuring fair work environments.
  - Article 23 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations states that everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/88/IMG/NR004388.pdf?OpenElement>
  - Teacher unions support the work of educators. States with the highest performance on national tests are states where teachers belong to unions that bargain collectively for their members. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/02/20/ravitch.teachers.blamed/>

index.html

- Teachers and other workers are also demanding truth about implications that public employees are the cause of budget deficits.
  - While implying that the cost of state employee contracts, benefits or pensions are directly related to the current deficit in Wisconsin, Governor Walker and his allies supported \$140 million in new spending for special-interest groups in January, including programs that will benefit Wall Street firms and Bond Lawyers. <http://www.onewisconsinnow.org/press/walker-concocts-scoop-and-toss-borrowing-scheme-to-pay-for-140-million-in-special-interest-spending.html>
- This is not just about teacher unions. Teachers, nurses, prison workers, state office workers, university employees are all being targeted. As workers lose the right to be heard, we move further from democracy. Who will be next?
- <http://thesabloggers.org/2011/02/why-were-protesting-the-wisconsin-budget-repair-bill/>

### **Not in the best interest of children**

**Our primary job is to help children be successful citizens in a democracy.**

Public school teachers have been the “whipping boy” of the American education reform. Reformers are not creating availability of quality education for all. They are not matching the conditions that they would seek for their own. Diane Ravitch states, “One must wonder how it is possible to talk of improving schools while cutting funding, demoralizing teachers, cutting scholarships to college, and increasing class sizes.” The wealthy can purchase options for their children, yet they sabotage opportunity for all children to receive the same quality of education. <http://www.cnn.com/2011/OPINION/02/20/ravitch.teachers.blamed/index.html>

### **Our questions:**

**Is this basically about the destruction of unions?**

Is this another instance in which public employees are being vilified in the interests of privatization?

Is this about who supported the governor in the past election?

What would the cost in jobs be when those who have their salaries reduced stop spending money?

What happens next?

If this is happening in Wisconsin; if the governor can manipulate the budget so that he can claim a deficit when there is none, are other Republican governors doing the same thing? Is this happening in other states?

### **Action:**

1. Write to your representative. It will take 16 Republicans plus the Democrats to stop the bill. <https://writerep.house.gov/writerep/welcome.shtml#email>

link

2. Sign action petitions [http://act.boldprogressives.org/sign/sign\\_wiunion/?akid=3352.605453.UQZORz&rd=1&source=e2-6mo-fwd-fin&t=1](http://act.boldprogressives.org/sign/sign_wiunion/?akid=3352.605453.UQZORz&rd=1&source=e2-6mo-fwd-fin&t=1)

**What can be done if the Budget Adjustment/Budget Repair Bill does pass?**

People are already talking about starting action to recall state senators who have been in office for more than one year.

Is there a way to go to court because contracts have been broken and labor laws have been ignored?