



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 20, 2011

AFL-CIO Issues Ultimatum to Obama Administration

There may be trouble in paradise between the Obama administration and its union support as AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka (left) is expected to issue an ultimatum to the administration in a speech this afternoon at the National Press Club. According to Trumka, congressional Democrats aren't doing enough to back labor unions.



The Blaze [reports](#):

In prepared remarks, Trumka said the role of unions is not to build the power of any political party, but to improve the lives of working families. He promised that unions would spend the summer holding leaders in Congress and the states accountable.

The AFL-CIO is in the process of considering a plan that involves spending less on congressional races and more money on state elections, particularly in areas like Wisconsin and Ohio, where lawmakers have targeted unions and reduced collective bargaining rights.

The Blaze writes that the nations largest firefighter union has already stopped making donations to members of Congress, asserting that they have not made a sufficient effort to support union rights. The move has won praise in many corners of the labor movement, where union activists have openly grumbled about House and Senate Democrats being too quiet while unions are getting pummeled in dozens of states.

Trumka said, It doesnt matter if candidates and parties are controlling the wrecking ball or simply standing aside. The outcome is the same either way. If leaders arent blocking the wrecking ball and advancing working families interests, working people will not support them.

He also bemoans lawmakers willingness to pass budgets that reduce pensions and impact collective bargaining rights of so-called middle class union members while allowing the so-called powerful and well-connected to benefit from tax cuts.

According to Trumka, the budget deals being hammered out by politicians reveal that sacrifice is for the weak.

The final outrage of these budgets is hidden in the fine print, Trumka explained. In state after state, and here in Washington, these so called fiscal hawks are actually doing almost nothing to cut the deficit.

Trumkas union has already spent \$50 million to support Democrats in the 2010 midterm elections, but many members regret the amount they spent on lawmakers. Some contend that a better use of resources would be spent on fostering grass roots efforts at the state level.

The lack of union donations can have a potentially detrimental impact for some Democrats, who have



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come to rely heavily on such financial support.

The Blaze explains:

Trumka and other union leaders have said they expect the moves in some states to curb union rights will create a backlash that will help organized labor grow stronger. Unions are already spending millions to help recall campaigns in Wisconsin and Ohio. They are hoping the momentum of those recalls can be sustained through the 2012 elections.

The Obama administration has found itself in the midst of a number of union battles, particularly as of late. Most recently, a group of Senate Republicans recently sent a letter to President Obama with threats to vigorously oppose nominations to the National Labor Relations Board after the NLRB issued a complaint that the Republicans see as an assault on right-to-work states.

Fox News writes:

The NLRB has filed a complaint against the Boeing Company for what it calls an “unlawfully motivated” expansion by the airplane builder into the right-to-work state of South Carolina. The complaint has potentially wide-reaching ramifications, not only for Boeing, but for almost all companies seeking to do business in the 22 states presently governed by right-to-work rules.

In general, the White House has been relatively quiet on the issue of the NLRB complaint. One White House official said, This is an independent agency's enforcement action. The White House does not get involved in particular enforcement matters.

However, the White House has been accused to placing a number of pro-union recess appointments on the NLRB.

Larry Sabato, a political science professor at the University of Virginia, admitted, Its very important to President Obama because unions and their workers comprise a big piece of the volunteer core of the Democratic Party and a lot of money besides. The stronger unions are, the more workers and the more money they're going to put into Obamas campaign and all the Democratic campaigns.

For the AFL-CIO, however, it seems that Obamas support has not been enough.



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