



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on October 19, 2011

## California's Governor Brown Delivers for Labor Unions

Grimes added that the Governor "even included a signing message in which he proclaimed the bill to be 'fair' and 'democratic.'" However, she pointed out, the legislation "will actually do the opposite of what Brown's signing message said":

It suppresses the competition rights of small businesses and infringes on local governments' ability to use free-market, non-union construction labor. And it's already mandated by the state that all employees must receive union wages, even if they are not union members, when working on public projects.



In *Human Events*, Steven Greenhut noted that the [Los Angeles Times](#), in an article on Brown's support for labor this year, commented: "When the dust settled on Gov. Jerry Brown's first legislative session in nearly three decades, no group has won more than organized labor, which heralded its largest string of legislative victories in nearly a decade."

What sort of victories does that mean? The Governor approved a new law that makes it hard for cities to go into bankruptcy when saddled with impossible union contracts and, instead, compels the cities to go through a mediation process largely dominated by public-employee unions.

Last November it was obvious that many state governments across the country faced a financial meltdown caused by many decades of extravagant spending, much of which was heaped on the robust public-employees unions. Some Governors, such as Scott Walker in Wisconsin and Chris Christie in New Jersey, have taken on those unions and insisted on restraining long-term commitments from taxpayers to these union employees.

Over the years, Jerry Brown has presented the image of a creative outsider, prompting some to call him in the past "Governor Moonbeam." He ran last year as just such a Governor. In some ways, observers noted, he was ideally situated to reject special interest groups and do what was good for the state.

Such independence has seldom been seen in Brown's dealings with organized labor, a powerful political force in California. He has taken a few actions in that direction. As one example, he vetoed a bill that would have unionized daycare workers. He also opposed ending the secret ballot on union elections for farm workers. But his record as a whole during the last legislative session is clear evidence that he is not tackling the really tough powers in California politics.

Brown also vetoed a bill that would have undone a state supreme court ruling that allows police, after an individual is arrested, to search through that person's smart phone, e-mails, phone numbers, and even tap into a news reporter's data to fish for incriminating evidence. This veto was supported by the Peace Officers Research Association of California, which contributed generously to Brown's last campaign for Governor.



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Governor Brown has a long history of holding state and local offices in California. Besides serving as Governor in the 1970s, he has been Secretary of State, Attorney General, and Mayor of Oakland. The leftist Brown family — including his late father Pat Brown, Governor in the 1960s, and his sister Kathleen, who served as State Treasurer in the 1990s — has been immersed in California state politics for half a century.



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