



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 2, 2010

## Labor Unions Fear Republican Congressional Takeover

The Democrats are not the only ones apprehensive about the outcome of today's soon-to-be historic vote. According to the *New York Times*, "Organized labor is deeply worried about what happens after Tuesday."

The labor unions' fears are by no means unfounded, as Republican candidates have asserted their desire to reduce the political power of the unions by way of legislation.

The *New York Times* explains, "One bill that is popular among Republicans would prohibit employers from ever agreeing to unionization through 'card check,' a process often used today in which an employer recognizes a union as soon as a majority of workers sign pro-union cards — without holding a secret ballot election."



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The *Times* adds, "Another bill would severely crimp labor's campaign spending by barring unions from using any portion of a union member's dues for political purposes unless the member first gives written permission."

Doug Heye, a spokesman for the Republican National Committee, asserts that Republican union members would be particularly pleased by the second bill, as current law allows unions to use a member's dues for political campaigns, unless the member "opts out." The bill proposed by Republicans would now require members to first "opt in."

Heye claims that upon traveling the country, he saw that union members in support of Republicans were angered that their unions were spending money to back the Democratic candidates.

Not surprisingly, the unions have contested the opt-in proposal.

Bill Samuel of the AFL-CIO asserts, "Obviously, this would further tilt the tables in favor of corporations in our political campaigns. Let's hope the Republicans focus on putting people back to work, instead of taking away workers' rights."

Joseph McCartin, a labor historian at Georgetown University, remarks, "Republicans are likely to pursue a version of what [AFL founder] Samuel Gompers [and President Obama] often said: 'Reward your friends and punish your enemies.' "

However, it seems that the Republicans' intent to reduce the political clout of labor unions is driven less by vengeance and more by a movement toward fiscal responsibility, conservatism, and the restoration of constitutional values.

Reason TV notes that the gap between union employees and those of the private sector is nearly \$30,000 when one considers salary and benefits. Likewise, union employees' positions are nearly



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impossible to terminate. Finally, unions are virtually a “permanent lobby for expanded government and higher taxes.” In addition to these things, the [taxpayer has been on the hook for failing union pension funds](#), even as the American taxpayers are being laid off at an astronomical rate.

In addition to the financial burden that labor unions tend to impose on the taxpayer, the unions often have a far-left agenda that unfortunately has clout with the politicians. In California, for example, the American Civil Liberties Union, California Faculty Association, California Federation of Teachers, and California Teachers Association voiced their support of SB 1322, a bill that would have allowed the promotion of communism in public schools. Capitol Resource Institute spokesperson Karen England explained, “SB 1322 would delete the requirement that an individual or organization wanting to use the school property is not a Communist action organization or Communist front organization” and would also “strike the law that a public school or community college employee may be fired if he or she is a member of the Communist Party.” Most importantly, perhaps, the law would have allowed teachers to indoctrinate students with a preference for communism. Fortunately, the bill was vetoed by California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Furthermore, labor unions have a reputation for employing thuggery when their agendas are disputed. In August 2009, for example, Kenneth Gladney, a black conservative Tea Party member, was violently attacked by SEIU [Service Employees International Union] members after he handed out yellow flags that read “Don’t Tread on Me.” During the attack, one of the union members shouted racial slurs at Gladney.

In May of this year, approximately 500 SEIU members were bussed to the home of Bank of America’s senior executive Greg Baer to indicate their opposition to banks. Unfortunately, in the process of protesting outside of Baer’s home, Baer’s son, who happened to be home alone, grew so frightened that he resorted to locking himself in the bathroom in anticipation of his father’s return.

The *Chicago Daily Examiner* reported that union workers in Illinois resorted to violent tactics to indicate their disapproval of Illinois-based Lyondell Basell plant’s decision to hire out-of-state workers to “perform temporary ‘turnaround’ work at the facility.” According to the *Examiner*, eyewitnesses watched as unions damaged company and personal property and hurled stones at individuals as they entered the plant.

In 2009, two members of the Communications Workers of America Union (CWA) blew the whistle on other union workers who were paid for work they did not actually perform. As a result, they faced intimidation from their fellow union workers, followed by physical attacks.

It is clear to both conservative politicians and American voters that something needs to be done about the labor unions.

In addition to proposed legislation against the labor unions’ excesses, labor unions must contend with the reality that if the Republicans take control of the House of Representatives, Minnesota’s Republican Representative John Kline is expected to succeed California Democrat George Miller as chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

Kline’s political philosophies have given the unions cause for fear. In an email outlining his plans as a chairman, Kline noted: “One of the greatest threats to job creation is economic uncertainty. The solution is to take economic threats — like tax hikes and card check — off the table and make the laws governing our workplaces more understandable, workable and effective for workers and employers.”



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As noted in the *New York Times*, Kline is “chief sponsor of the Secret Ballot Protection Act, a bill with 115 House co-sponsors that would bar employers from agreeing to unionization through card check.” Likewise, Kline has criticized the Davis-Bacon Act, requiring construction workers to be paid the prevailing wage on federal public works, even if they are not unionized.

It is policies like these that Republicans are expected to target after the midterm elections.

Sensing that their position is in danger, the labor unions poured a tremendous amount of money into Democratic campaign coffers this year.

Gerald W. McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees — a group that has spent \$91 million in the two-year campaign cycle — contends, “We fear that the Republicans are on the march, and that’s why we’re doing everything we can to stop them.”

McEntee has praised the White House for its passage of the \$26 billion stimulus bill that allegedly saved the jobs of teachers, police officers, and other government employees, and has asserted that Republicans would likely not pass similar measures.

Perhaps that explains the GOP’s 15-point lead in [Gallup’s generic ballot](#).

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, McEntee’s single union outspent the United States Chamber of Commerce, which spent \$75 million.

It seems, however, that the unions’ massive financial input will not be of assistance to them this year. In fact, many Republicans who have spoken out against labor unions find themselves with a comfortable margin of victory against their Democratic counterparts, including Arizona gubernatorial incumbent Jan Brewer, Nevada’s Republican senatorial candidate Sharron Angle, and Colorado’s senatorial GOP candidate Ken Buck.

New Jersey Governor Chris Christie’s popularity is a good indication of where the unions currently stand, as it was Christie’s agenda to promote fiscal responsibility, thereby necessitating an anti-union agenda, that helped him secure his victory in the first place.

According to the *Socialist Worker*, “Christie’s unapologetic anti-union stance, his publicly professed determination to cut back on ‘entitlements’ (read: union benefits), and his shameless attempts to divide public- and private-sector workers have, in these few short months, had a devastating impact not only on the livelihoods of thousands across the state but on the ideological climate as well.”

Christie, with growing popularity in his own state (51 percent) as well as nationwide, may provide a sneak-peek at the future of labor unions under a Republican takeover.

If so, be afraid, labor union leaders. Be very afraid.

*Photo: Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., left, pauses as he answers questions on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s comments on the energy bill, Aug. 12, 2008, during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington: AP Images*



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