



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 28, 2011

Unions Refocus Energy on State Campaigns

Provoked by the varieties of so-called “anti-union legislation” being passed across the nation, unions have decided to refocus all of their attention and energy on state elections rather than federal elections. Such a strategy could pose a problem for President Obama and his Democratic colleagues during the 2012 elections. Harold Schaitberger, president of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), says, “We’ve decided to freeze all contributions to federal candidates, federal committees, and federal candidate PAC’s in order to really refocus on battles we are experiencing in a number of states.”



Unions are angered by state efforts to limit public employee collective bargaining powers, as was seen in Wisconsin, where labor unions took over the state capitol for days in protest.

“It really galvanized us and it energized us and it became a rallying point for us to understand that we’ve got to be willing to now fight back,” said Schaitberger.

Fox News writes of the unions’ new strategy to focus on the states:

Analysts say there are a number of reasons unions are shifting their resources, including frustration with the White House. Larry Sabato, director of the Center for Politics at the University of Virginia told FOX News that unions and “the left generally” are showing signs of dissatisfaction with Obama — “There is no question about that.”

Schaitberger willingly admitted to this very assessment, stating: “There is some dismay and disappointment in the administration’s efforts on behalf of workers and American workers and America’s middle class.”

Regardless of union dissatisfaction with the White House and the funneling of resources into state elections, Sabato predicts that the Obama administration will continue to benefit indirectly. “Even if they’re giving to state legislative races, or gubernatorial races, or congressional races, there’s a spillover into the presidential contest,” he commented.

Unions have already been kept busy by issues occurring within the states. For example, the National Labor Relations Board issued a complaint against aircraft maker Boeing last week after the company moved its plant to South Carolina because it is a “[right to work](#)” state — where workers are not required to join a union at a unionized workplace.

According to the *Maryland Reporter*, the “right to work” status is beneficial to the states:

This means that employers in the private sector could not require employees to join unions, discriminate against employees based on their union membership, or force employees who choose not to join unions to make any payments to the union. It would not have any impact on unions representing state or local government employees.



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Likewise, “right to work” states generally boast greater job growth and higher wages.

South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley proudly asserted that she will see to it that her state's “right to work” status does not change, declaring, “We are not going to get bullied by the unions one more day.”

In addition to issuing the complaint against Boeing, the NLRB has turned its attention to Arizona and South Dakota, both of which passed amendments to their state constitutions that require secret ballot elections when employees vote whether or not to unionize companies, instead of the “card-check” method which allows unionization when a majority of employees sign authorization forms allowing a union to represent them.

The NLRB contends that the amendments are unconstitutional, to which Arizona Attorney General Tom Horne responds, “Imagine what would happen if the Obama administration told [Americans] that normal elections would be no longer secret ballot, but they’d have to sign something that would be open to other people to see how they voted?” According to Horne, voters are being intimidated and their most basic rights have been “violated.”

The NLRB has already announced its intent to launch lawsuits against South Carolina and Utah for similar provisions.

Photo: Vice President Joe Biden speaks to the IAFF on March 16, 2009.



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