



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on February 25, 2011

Wisconsin Protests Go National

The *New York Times* [reported](#) on one in Las Vegas held Monday, February 21, which drew “several hundred” protestors. “We are supporting the people in Wisconsin and other people in this country that are out to stand against those who want to take away collective bargaining,” Steve Harney, vice president and director of operations of Teamsters Local No. 14, told the *Times*.



Similar rallies were also held in support of Walker. The non-profit American Majority, through the website www.istandwithwalker.com, called for “a national demonstration of support for Scott Walker and leaders across the country who have the courage to fight the public sector union bosses” on February 23. “This is the moment and opportunity for the tea partiers, and those who want limited government and support the free market, to stand firm against the greed and dangerous statist philosophy of the public sector unions,” the group’s President, Ned Ryun, said in a statement.

The call to action urged activists to host or attend a rally or candlelight vigil in support of Walker, Wisconsin legislators, and others like them. Another option was writing a blog post or an op-ed on the issue. Finally, Ryun asked activists to update their Facebook statuses and use the Twitter social-networking service to show their support of Gov. Walker and his policies. “We must show our politicians that we can make just as much noise when they are doing the right things as well,” Ryun said. “Now is the time to fight.”

A coalition of leftist groups including [MoveOn.org](#) and People For the American Way is also organizing rallies in all 50 state capitals on February 26. The “solidarity” protests were organized under the banner of “Save the American Dream” rallies. “It’s not just Wisconsin. Republicans are launching a coordinated assault on workers in other states, too,” MoveOn.org said in a letter to supporters urging them to rally in state capitals. “That’s why we need to nationalize the fight — to show Republicans that we won’t fight back state-by-state, but as a united, national movement.” The Communist Party and its propaganda organs also [encouraged](#) their supporters to do the same.

Some [analysts](#) predict the chaos in Wisconsin is actually just a foreshadowing of a broader conflict that will soon paralyze states across the nation. Both sides have emphasized that similar battles are playing out around the country, and that the results in Wisconsin will have broad implications for other states and the federal government. And considering the states’ fiscal situations — just unfunded pension



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liabilities are estimated at around \$3 trillion — the battle over austerity is just getting started. And Wisconsin, at least compared to states such as New Jersey, California, and Illinois, was doing relatively well.

Bloomberg news service [reported](#) on February 18 that several thousand government employees converged on the Ohio state capitol to battle similar measures. Tea Partiers also showed up to support loosening the grip of public-sector unions. The number of demonstrators eventually swelled to a [reported 15,000](#), and, in its second week, showed no signs of letting up.

By February 21, union protests had also spread to Indiana as the demonstrations in Ohio were still growing. Democrat lawmakers, following [the example](#) of their counterparts in Wisconsin, [fled the state as well](#). And labor leaders have vowed to continue fighting similar budget-cutting proposals across the country.

GOP Governors across America are also getting ready for a showdown. They recently banded together through the Republican Governors Association to support Gov. Walker, even setting up a website under the banner "[Stand with Scott](#)." "Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker is in the middle of what will be a defining moment for our country and the conservative movement," said RGA Chairman and Texas Gov. Rick Perry. "It is essential that we stand with Governor Walker and show political leaders throughout the country that America is ready to take on its toughest political challenges."

The *Wall Street Journal*, in a piece headlined "[Wisconsin Protest Becomes Proxy Fight for Washington](#)," noted that national-level politicians including [President Barack Obama](#) and House Speaker John Boehner had already spoken out regarding the situation in the state. The paper said the battle raging in Madison was somewhat of a microcosm for what will soon play out at the federal level and in states across the nation.

Libertarians see it too. The Future of Freedom Foundation President Jacob Hornberger, in an opinion piece, [noted](#) that he sensed a broader struggle. "Wisconsin might just be the first of a string of state dominoes to be falling," he suggested. "With the federal government itself hurtling toward bankruptcy owing to its ever-increasing welfare-warfare state spending and debt, and with such foreign welfare states as Greece and Ireland on the ropes, and now with American state governments in financial straits, the world might just be witnessing the death throes of the welfare state at all levels of government."

Hornberger's solution: Separate school and state, get the government out of charity, end the drug war, and fire all of the bureaucrats associated with those issues. "It's time to ask that fundamental question: What should be the role of government in a free society? Once we answer that question, we can then dismantle all the departments, agencies, and bureaucracies that are engaged in illegitimate activity and end all the spending, taxes, and borrowing needed to sustain them," he noted.

Conservative U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint of South Carolina explained the Wisconsin protests as part of something bigger as well. "The unions are viewing Wisconsin as a community organizing 'warm-up' for 2012," he said in a letter to supporters, saying the unions had a "stranglehold" on state and federal budgets due in part to the largesse showered on Democratic political campaigns. "I'll be watching the events in Wisconsin very closely. I hope you do, too. It's an eye-opening preview of what's to come in 2012 and a reminder of why we must stay together in this fight to save our country."

State and local governments all over America are wrestling with massive budget deficits and unfunded pension liabilities that threaten to bankrupt their treasuries, not to mention the taxpayers. Numerous



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Governors — even including some Democrats — have already started the process of reducing state-employee pensions and benefits in states from New Jersey to Florida. Municipalities and local governments are facing similar scenarios, with many opting to raise taxes on their already-hard-pressed citizens. But considering the fiscal train wreck of most government entities in the United States and even around the world, observers expect the battles to continue intensifying and spreading before the problems are resolved.

Photo of tea party rally in Madison, Wis.: AP Images

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