

The Professionals Guild of Ohio



PGO UNION NEWS

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Conservatives Hijack Youngstown Schools

*By Nicole D. Jackson,
PGO Field Representative*

The conservative Ohio legislature has decided to take over what it deems to be "failing" school districts. This may not sound like such a bad idea until you read the plan that has been put in place in a 66-page amendment that passed in House Bill 70 ("HB 70"). This bill is a brazen power-grab that renders the elected school board powerless, and puts total control in the hands of an unelected CEO.

HB 70 includes a so-called "Academic Distress Commission" that will hire a CEO to run the district, promote more charter schools, put more control over schools in the hands of the city mayor by having the mayor appoint the entire school board, and possibly overriding parts of union contracts.

So what is an Academic Distress Commission anyway? In Ohio, an Academic Distress Commission is a joint school district and state five-member panel that steps in and tries to fix a failing school.

Currently, Youngstown and Lorain school districts have Academic Distress Commissions running their schools, but only Youngstown

is affected by the amendments to HB 70 for now. It is important to note that this can happen in Dayton, Cambridge, Toledo, Columbus, Athens, or any other school district in the state deemed to be in "academic distress."

One of the most startling changes found in HB 70 is the appointment of a new CEO who would inherit all the powers of the school board already in place in the district. This CEO would be appointed by the Academic Distress Commission and will be paid up to \$150,000 a year by the state.

Some of the duties for the new CEO, as described by the Legislative Service Commission, would include:

- 1) Replacing school administrators and central office staff;
- 2) Assigning employees to schools and approving transfers;
- 3) Hiring new employees;
- 4) Defining employee responsibilities and job descriptions;
- 5) Establishing employee compensation;
- 6) Allocating teacher class loads;
- 7) Conducting employee evaluations;
- 8) Making reductions in staff;

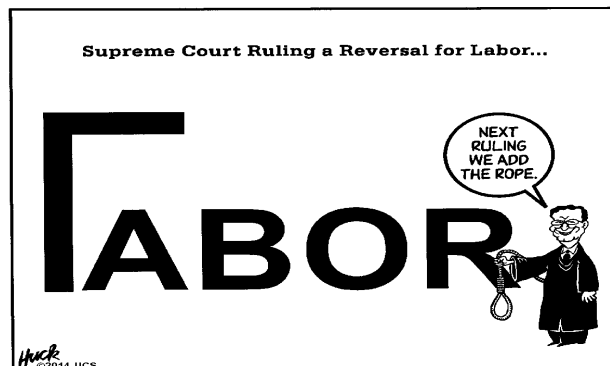
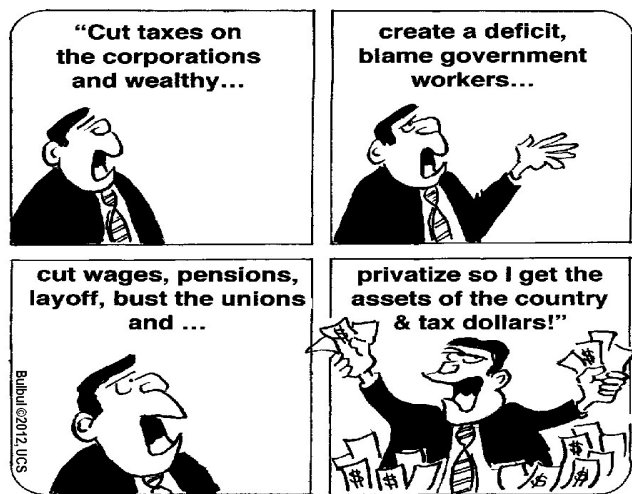
- 9) Determining school curriculum;
- 10) Setting class sizes

In year three, the CEO can change or suspend any rules in place in union contracts, so long as they do not lower the pay and benefits of employees.

Among those instrumental in getting this bill passed were former OSU football coach and Youngstown native Jim Tressel, and Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce President, Tom Humphries. Both went to Columbus to testify in favor of the bill. There was never a public hearing on the amended bill. Teachers unions have condemned the passing of HB 70, stating that neither the unions, teachers, community, or even the state school board were involved in the process of drafting the amendment to the bill.

The situation in Youngstown is troubling because democratically run schools are being converted into autocratic business models run by CEOs. Governor Kasich and the conservative legislature seem to think schools in Ohio should be run like businesses with our children traded like commodities. They have made it clear that they do not want communities and parents to have a voice (vote) in who runs their schools.

It is reported that Youngstown has the highest poverty rate among Ohio's ten major cities, and it is eighth in the nation for poverty among more than 550 ranked cities. Poverty is the greatest barrier to education. The governor and Ohio legislature should focus on eliminating poverty if they truly want to improve schools.



U.S. Supreme Court Could Make "Right to Work" Nationwide for Public Sector

By Nicole D. Jackson, PGO Field Representative

In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a case that could be decided as early as the first part of 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court will issue a ruling that could make the entire public sector so called "right to work." If the union in the case loses, the case will make it illegal for unions to collect a "fair share" fee from non-members. Members in public sector unions will be able to opt out of membership and pay nothing for the advantages provided by union representation such as job security, higher wages and benefits. However, unions will still be legally required by law to represent non-fee payers.

Don't be fooled by the misleading and deceptive title, the people that push the right to work agenda are the same people funding the petitioners' case in *Friedrichs v. CTA*. They have one goal: defund, divide, weaken, and bust the unions. The forces attacking unions in this case want "free riders," those people who enjoy the pay increases, great benefits, job security and union representation but do not want to pay their "fair share" for these services.

There has not been a greater time than today for all workers to mobilize and show the anti-labor forces that our unions will stand strong and remain members. Unions are perceived to be a threat by big businesses run by money-loving corporate bosses and their political allies because working people that mobilize and have a voice in the workplace are seen as a threat to the obscenely excessive profits and lifestyles of greedy people. Such businesses prefer their workers to be powerless. Without unions, workers' rights and bargaining power in the workplace would be diminished to the point of indentured servitude.

Sadly, anti-worker politics may have now taken over our highest court.

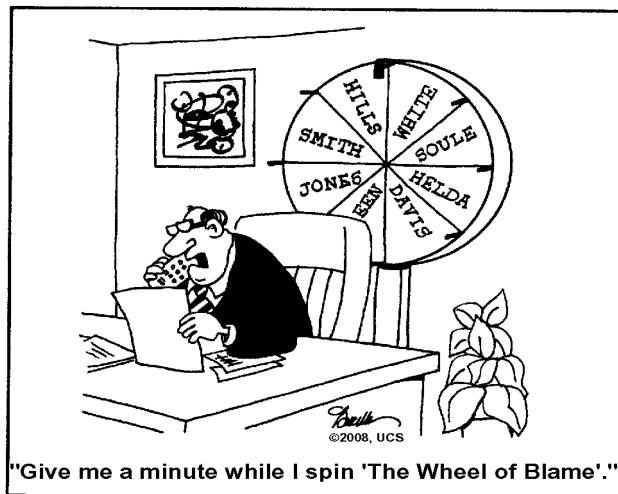
If anti-union forces are allowed to bust unions, we will see pay cuts, decreased benefits, longer hours, higher turnover, and our children will never know what it means to have a pension. Remember, "power concedes nothing without a demand." Take away the ability of workers to organize and collectively demand decent wages and working conditions, and you get nothing.

Right to Work Fails to Save Jobs in Michigan

By Paul Henry, PGO Field Representative

Back in 2012, Rick Snyder, the Governor of Michigan, pushed right to work through the legislature in a matter of days. RTW was touted by Mr. Snyder as a way to bring business back to a suffering state. As with the many other anti-worker politicians, he claimed that without having to deal with unions, employers would be rushing to Michigan for better labor costs. It has been almost three years since Mr. Snyder enacted RTW and the results are in: Michigan's miracle never happened. In fact, Michigan is continuing to lose manufacturing jobs.

The Ford Motor company has chosen to move its small car production out of the country and seeks to accomplish this by 2018. Currently, the C-Max and Focus are being manufactured in Wayne, Michigan. The plant employs approximately 4,400 workers. In preparation for the move, Ford laid off seven hundred employees this past June. Ford has not dis-



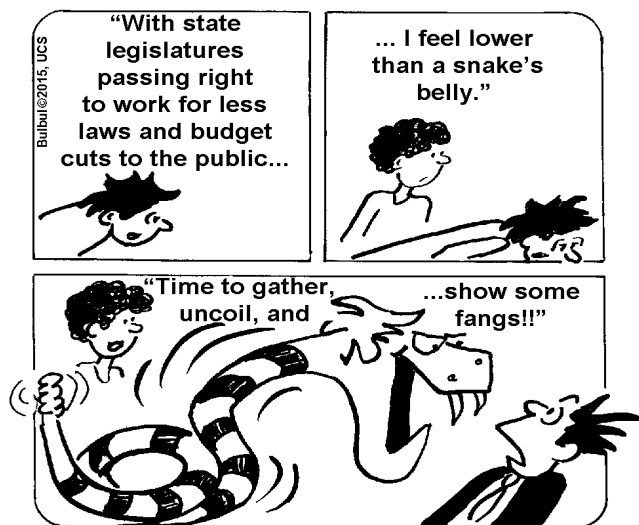
closed where the manufacturing will be moved but a likely candidate is Mexico.

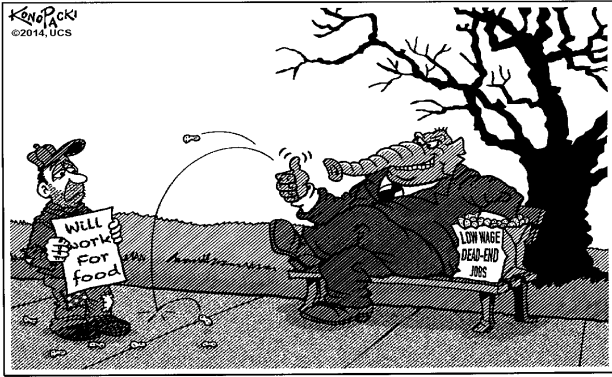
Mexico has seen a boom in auto manufacturing in recent years. It has seen an increase of 40 percent in auto jobs since 2008. There are eighteen foreign owned auto plants operating in Mexico and five more are currently under construction. With its cheap labor costs and trade agreements with the United States, manufacturers see it as an option to maximize their profit. This move by Ford shows that despite the promises of RTW bringing jobs into Michigan, the attrition continues.

The workers at the Ford plant in Wayne, Michigan have to face the harsh realization that RTW does not benefit them. Prior to being informed that they would be losing their jobs, they underwent a nine dollar an hour pay cut. In this day and age, corporate profits will trump a living wage for workers. Not only has RTW limited their ability to bargain for better wages and benefits, it hasn't prevented them from losing their jobs. We should all take this as a lesson that the promises RTW advocates claim will happen, rarely do. Right to work is wrong for the workers.

PGO Says Goodbye to Nicole Jackson

Sadly, PGO has accepted the resignation of Nicole Jackson, a field representative since 2013. PGO has lost a hard-working, talented employee and we are sorry to see her leave. Nicole is a licensed attorney who will now seek opportunities in the legal profession. We hope that she will continue fighting for workers in her practice before the bar. We will miss Nicole and wish her well in all her future endeavors.





More Pay? Conservatives say work longer hours

By Paul Henry, PGO Field Representative

While employees are working longer hours for stagnant wages, there have been calls for change. The labor movement backed “Fight for 15” wants to raise the minimum wage to fifteen dollars an hour so that no matter what job someone works, he/she would be able to survive. Ohio’s current minimum wage is \$8.10 an hour. If a person were to work 40 hours a week for fifty two weeks, his/her salary would be \$16,848. At \$15 an hour, this would bring an annual wage up to \$31,200. Some conservative politicians think that this is a bad idea. Their answer to low wages: “work harder.”

This conservative view is very disturbing for the working class. It is the equivalent of saying that if you can’t make it based on what you are earning, then you have no one to blame but yourself. Clearly this view is ludicrous. For a person earning minimum wage, to make approximately what a full time \$15 an hour employee would make annually, he/she would have to work close to 74 hours a week. If someone is working those kinds of hours, hopefully he/she doesn’t have children. If they do have children, hopefully they have a helpful family member. The cost of daycare in Ohio ranges on average between \$8,000 and \$4,500 a year. This means that close to 1,000 hours worked at the minimum wage would go to take care of the child you couldn’t be around because you were too busy working.

So how does working longer hours actually help the working class? It doesn’t. Requiring people to work longer hours merely because “they need to earn their money” is demeaning. Surely there should be enough respect in the workplace that everyone

should be allowed to earn a living wage without having to work two full time jobs. The labor movement fought hard for the forty hour work week. We all should continue to fight hard and do what we can to keep it.

Wisconsin: What Happened?

By Paul Henry, PGO Field Representative

Wisconsin has historically been one of the most progressive states in the nation. In the early 1900’s, strong leaders such as Robert LaFollette made Wisconsin a model for combating corporate power and political corruption. It was one of the most labor friendly states in the country. This trend has been reversed in recent years. How did this happen?

Wisconsin has lost about 90,000 manufacturing jobs (18-20 percent) since 2000. As with many other states, the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs has been in part due to free trade agreements. Laid-off manufacturing workers have been displaced into lower-paying jobs in the service industry. For those who did not lose their manufacturing jobs, wages have stagnated. This stagnation has been attributed to the de-unionization of the workforce since right to work was implemented in the state.

Marc Levine, the director of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development, stated “[i]n Wisconsin, we’ve obviously gone the opposite way over the last three or four years, Act 10 took away the collective bargaining rights for public employees, and the rate of unionization in the public sector has declined by about half in the state.” The loss of good jobs as well as the shrinking of the middle class has unfortunately put Wisconsin into a tailspin. Only time will tell if it will be able to recover.

PHARMACY



“It doesn’t actually do anything, but the side effects are very popular.”