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Local 495

Automotive, Industrial and Allied Workers

TEAMSTERS

Flash!

Robert M. Lennox, Secretary - Treasurer

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STOP

The War Against Workers

Local 495 Joins the Battle in Los Angeles



Anti-union push gains steam nationwide

Exactly one week after 15,000 union members marched through the streets of downtown Los Angeles, we received a powerful reminder of why the historic demonstration was sorely needed.

The Los Angeles Times reported that after the successful passing of anti-union bills in Wisconsin and Ohio, more than 700 similar bills have been introduced around the country. "Nearly half" of the states are considering limiting the collective bargaining rights of union members. The fight that was started

"The fight that was started in Wisconsin is about to become a full-fledged war."



by Robert M. Lennox
Secretary-Treasurer, Local 495

in Wisconsin is about to become a full-fledged war.

There is now a real danger that what began as an attack on public sector union members could spread to the private sector. The conservative movement, funded by their millionaire corporate backers, believes that they finally have an opening to attack America's working middle class.

As you will read in this issue, the dangers to the union movement are very real these days, as opposed to just being threats on the horizon. We live in a time when hard-won and fairly negotiated union contracts are considered fair game for dismantling, as long

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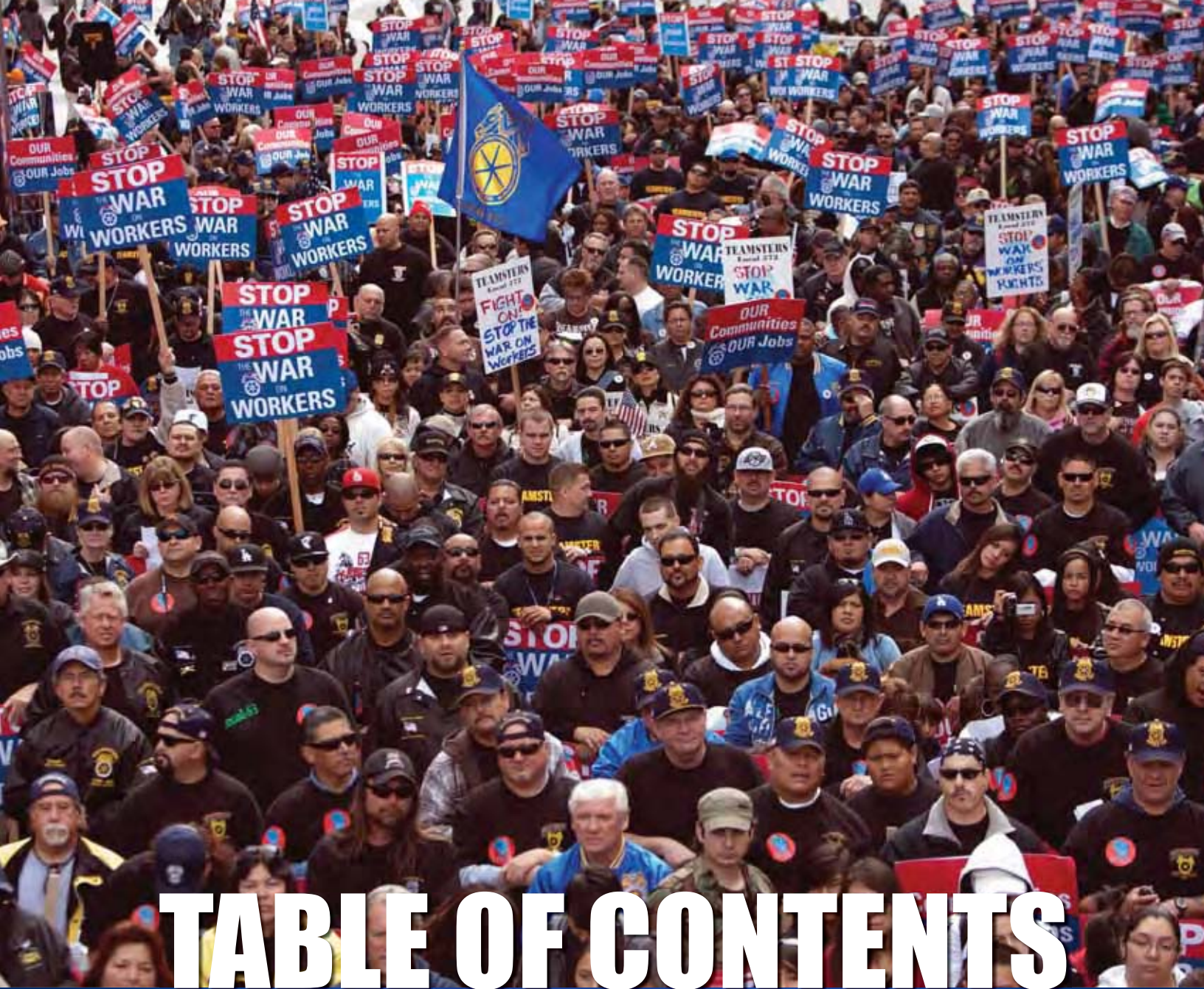


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15,000 March To Battle “War on Workers”

In what will likely be viewed as an historic event, Local 495 joined almost 15,000 union members and families who marched in downtown Los Angeles in a powerful display of strength and solidarity.

The demonstration was aimed at stopping the ‘War On Workers’ that has begun to happen in other states around the country. Following the governor of Wisconsin’s decision to strip public union members of their right to collective bargaining, legislators in at least a dozen other states have proposed similar bills.

“Today we march together to show corporate America that they cannot continue to push us around,” Local 495 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Lennox said before the march. “They continually want to blame middle class workers for their own poor budget planning. We have had enough.”

The March 26th rally began in front of Staples Center, where enthusiastic Teamsters gathered before joining members from unions representing laborers, electrical workers, firefighters, teachers and other professionals. The crowd stopped to protest businesses along the route that currently support anti-worker agendas before rallying in Pershing Square. There, labor and community leaders spoke in support of hard-working Americans and musicians entertained the energetic crowd.



The main issue concerning the members at the march was the dangerous trend of politicians and big business to blame middle-class workers for budget shortfalls. Corporate lobbyists are pressuring the politicians they helped elect into advancing legislation that hurts American workers and their families – all in their quest for higher profits.

Most recently this could be seen in states like Wisconsin and Ohio. There, Republican politicians sponsored and passed bills that remove public union members’ ability to bargain contracts effectively, as well as severely cutting back their benefits. The ‘Solidarity Saturday’ marches were





aimed at stopping similar legislation in other states, especially California.

"Big business has been systematically beating down hard working Americans for the last decade in an effort to increase their already sky-high profits," added Lennox. "Instead of appreciating and protecting the people who built their companies into what they are today, they are trying to discard us. It is time to remind them that the union members in their warehouses and behind the wheels of their trucks have rights."

Teamsters International President James P. Hoffa joined in the march, enhancing an effective national 'Solidarity Saturday' in which similar marches took place around the country. "We must stand together and fight to protect the middle class," President Hoffa said. "Together they can't beat us – together we will stop the war on workers."



Benefits of union membership

Union members have always posed a threat to corporate fat cats. Unions provide crucial support for workers by providing the structure where strength in numbers allows them to bargain for a contract, defend their right to workplace safety and protect them from unfair treatment on the job. Union members also earn higher wages and receive superior benefits and pensions than non-union workers.

Labor unions have set the standard for millions of other American workers through minimum wage legislation where it was sorely needed, achieving the standard work week and overtime protections, and ensuring worker safety through occupational health and safety regulations. We have also been at the forefront of social security, Medicare and child labor law reform.



Threats to the union movement

After more than a decade of beating down hard-working Americans, corporate America is now coming after the people who still have job protections: union members. These corporations

realize that the unions are the last bastion of workers' rights in this country. Union members still have respectable wages, benefits and pensions, and big business wants to destroy this.



This 'War on Workers' is being brought to state governments and Washington, DC, and is finding traction among conservative Republican legislators. Under the guise of balancing budgets, states such as Wisconsin are aggressively targeting workers' right to collective bargaining – a right hard-won after decades of struggle. Unfortunately, this is happening in other states at an alarming rate. Workers in Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Hampshire and Ohio are also coming under attack.

The reality is that eliminating collective bargaining rights of US workers has little to do with any state's deficit. The issue is political power to favor business at the expense of workers. That undermines principles of the historic labor movement -- about voting to achieve a collective bargaining agreement -- with no regard or compassion toward the welfare of American workers.





Right-To-Work Laws

Legislators and their corporate backers aren't just going after our right to collectively bargain contracts. A South Carolina Republican recently introduced federal legislation that aims to promote the right-to-work agenda.

The term "Right to Work" is misleading. It prohibits union membership as a condition of employment. It is nothing more than the classic divide-and-conquer strategy, used to weaken and destroy the power of the Local Unions at the bargaining table.

It may not be a danger now – the bill was promoted by only a few other Republicans – but it holds threats for the future. If a Republican is elected President next year, and their party continues to gain seats in the House and Senate, unions could be facing an all-out attack. Similar laws are already being proposed in other states as well: Michigan, Missouri, Indiana, Wisconsin, New Hampshire, Maine, and Minnesota.

The fight over the right-to-work issue will eventually come to California and will be a danger

to our members and families, both financially and physically. The average worker in states with right-to-work laws makes \$5,538 a year less than workers in other states. The rate of workplace deaths is also 52.9% higher in states where right-to-work laws mean that non-union labor is used.

In order to protect our hard won contracts, wages, benefits, pensions and safety procedures, the right-to-work (for less) agenda must be defeated wherever it crops up in this country.





Corporate \$\$\$\$\$ = Union Busting

You may be asking yourself, "Why would these politicians be so against American middle-class families?" The answer, as so often is the case, can be boiled down to one word: money.

When politicians have to fund their election campaigns, all of them turn to large corporations for help. Last November's elections brought many anti-union governors and lawmakers into statehouses throughout the country. These elections were financed by a wave of corporate cash never before seen in the United States.

Newly elected politicians must now pay back their corporate contributors by supporting their greed. Big business sees union members as the last group of workers that needs to be conquered, so that their already sky-high profits can grow even more. They are pressuring their 'newly purchased friends' in Washington, DC, in the campaign to destroy our rights.

WHAT YOU CAN

In these challenging times it is important for union members everywhere to stand together and fight for our rights. It is time to remind Corporate America and their political allies that this country was built by the hardworking people of the middle class, and that we demand to be treated fairly and preserve the rights we have fought so hard to achieve.

Join Demonstrations

You can participate in union demonstrations to help make sure that politicians and businesses hear the roar of the unions' voices. Even if you missed the march and rally in downtown, you can still participate and make a difference. Stay on the lookout for small or large demonstrations near your home and work, because any size rally you attend is a step in the right direction.



Support the DRIVE Program

The Teamster DRIVE program is the most politically successful and effective way to get involved. The best method for us to fight anti-union politicians is to become as active in Washington and other legislative centers as possible. DRIVE supports the International Teamsters political activities carried on by committed union people who are working in state capitals and at the national level to make sure our voices are represented in the House and Senate.



WE NEED TO DO TO HELP



Register and Vote

As always, it is important that you register to vote and cast your ballots for candidates who have the interests of working people in mind. You can also visit our local's website at www.Teamsters495.org to write a letter to your local Congressional Representative, as well as keep up to date on what is happening locally and around the nation.



Stay Informed

Visit your Local Union website at www.Teamsters495.org to follow the 'War on Workers.' There are links to many informative websites that will help keep you up to date on future legislation at home in California and around the country.

Assist in Organizing



Finally, we must maintain the strength of the Teamsters by continuing to aggressively organize. By adding to our already massive national membership of 1.3 million Teamsters, our union will be a stronger force to reckon with and it will prevail. Please call our Organizer, Johnny Espinoza, at 626-915-4954 if you have any friends or neighbors in need of strong union representation.



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Anti-union push gains steam nationwide

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as the political climate holds up and the public forgets that a contract is a legally binding entity. Fortunately the union movement, with the Teamsters leading the way, is ready to face these challenges head-on.

Demonstrations and marches by union supporters, like the one in downtown Los Angeles, took place around the country on what we called Solidarity Saturday. Unions from all

industries, both in the public and private sector, are coming together to show America that the hard working middle class deserves the wages and benefits that we have earned in over a hundred years of organization, negotiation and representation.

Large events and rallies make a lot of noise and draw attention to our cause, but the real fight needs to take place at the ground level. In this issue we provide you with the basic steps you can take in order to help preserve the gains we have made. Get involved in your local, vote for the candidates you trust, and help us organize! These

are not just catch phrases; they really make a difference.

Union members are being treated unfairly, and it is time to remind the rest of America why we deserve respect. Other working people in this country may have forgotten that their decent wages, working hours and safety regulations were fought for and won by unions, before these rights were extended to non-union workers.

Stay up-to-date by visiting our website, where you can learn more about joining our resistance against the 'War on Workers.'



Visit our website www.teamsters495.org