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# Solidarity!

## Right to Work is Not about Rights; it is Wrong for Wisconsin

Much like they did in enacting Act 10 a few years ago, Republican legislators once again adjourned the Committee hearing before all could be heard, and then voted to send the **Right to Work** Bill to the full Senate recommending that they adopt it. **The Senate adopted it with all democrats and one republican** (former Union member who values what the Union did for him) **voting NO!** *The action by the Republican majority was an embarrassment to democracy.* **Sen. Hanson** (Green Bay) said **“Right to Work will destroy the middle class. That it has caused a reduction of wages and a loss of benefits in other states.”**

The Bill was pushed through the Senate by Republican Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald (Juneau). **The Bill is nearly identical to the model recommended by conservative policy developer American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).** Fitzgerald, in speaking before the Committee hearing, said his proposal would **“protect every worker”** from being forced to join a union. The National Labor Relations Act already does that, and has for about 75 years. In some settings like MMSD, those who decide not to join the union at their workplace pay a representation fee, because they receive the wage increases, the fringe benefits, and the other rights which the union negotiates - and the union is obligated to represent them in things like discipline and dismissal. Fitzgerald’s claim of “forced unionism” is simply NOT TRUE.

**It is interesting that a coalition of over 400 employers oppose the Bill**, stating that they hire skilled workers through the union’s, apprenticeship program that they depend on and works well with the unions.

**Right to Work provides no rights to working people.** It will result in taking the guarantees of just cause and due process away from workers. At the peril of workers and their families, it will reduce income to line the pockets of corporate executives.

**What is missing is the recognition that labor rights are human rights. Labor rights enable workers to have equal rights. It took a half-century for unions to develop methods to achieve balance at the bargaining table.** *U.S. Supreme Court Justice Holmes wrote many years ago that collective bargaining agreements provide employment security, as well as wage increases, (and) an effective voice for employees in the workplace.* **Right to Work** will destroy what Justice Holmes praised as providing equality for working people.

## No Child Left “Untested” (Behind) – Reauthorization on the Fast Track

When President Johnson signed into law in 1965 the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the purpose of ESEA was to help **level the playing field for our nation’s most vulnerable students, including children living in poverty, students with disabilities, and English-language learners.** When it was reauthorized by President Bush in 2001, it became known as *No Child Left Behind* to the public, and to teachers as **“No Child Left Untested”!** Congress is currently fast-tracking the reauthorization of ESEA. **If educators want a voice in what ESEA looks like, the time to raise voices is now!**

ESEA reauthorization is an opportunity to set a new vision of shared responsibility for a public education system that promotes opportunity, equity, and excellence for all students. At a time of rising childhood poverty, our inequitable systems of school finance at the state and local levels, combined with federal cuts, have exacerbated local schools’ ability to fill opportunity gaps for students most in need. **More than 50% of the nation’s public school students are now eligible for free- and**

**reduced-priced meals.** Nearly 16 million children in the United States – **20% of all children** – **live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level - \$23,850 a year for a family of four.** Increasing funding for public schools, as well as targeted investments like Early Childhood Education, English Language Learners (ELL), and efforts to make college more affordable, are essential to address the challenges.

Contact Congressman **Mark Pocan** (202-225-2906; [www.pocan.house.gov](http://www.pocan.house.gov)) now and tell him it is time to help educators meet the challenges of our student population. Suggest the following changes to ESEA:

- Reduce high-stakes testing to allow time to learn.
- Remove the high-stakes decisions associated with assessments.
- Ensure educator voices are a part of the policy-making process.
- Help fund student opportunities to learn.

## Our Union Makes Us Strong!

MTI’s web page - [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org)

MTI’s email - [MTI@madisonteachers.org](mailto:MTI@madisonteachers.org)

## Joint Handbook Committee Work Gets Underway; Union Meetings being Scheduled this Month

**MTI-represented employees continue to be covered by Collective Bargaining Agreements through June 30, 2016.** MTI's Contracts will be the only Contracts in the State for school district employees. When those Collective Bargaining Agreements expire, the terms and conditions for District employees will be governed by the Act 10-mandated Employee Handbook. The Board of Education has approved a process for the *development of the employee handbook* which will include a joint Oversight Group composed of five (5) members appointed by MTI, two (2) members appointed by AFSCME, one (1) member appointed by the Building Trades Council, three (3) building principals and up to five (5) other administrators. ***It has been agreed that the Collective Bargaining Agreements will serve as the foundation of those discussions.***

The goal of the Oversight Group is to develop consensus recommendations over the contents of the Employee Handbook and provide those recommendations to the Superintendent and to the MTI Board of Directors by the end of August, 2015. While the goal of the Oversight Group is to reach consensus on these recommendations, on any area where consensus is not reached, the Superintendent will make her recommendations to the Board of Education. The Unions can do likewise. The Board of Education retains final say on the Handbook.

The first step of the Employee Handbook process has begun. **MTI is in the process of scheduling multiple Union membership meetings which will be held the week of March 23.** These meetings will be to discuss the process and provide the opportunity for members to share ideas, suggestions and concerns they would like to see addressed in the Employee Handbook discussions. More information on these meetings (date/location/time) will be forthcoming.

## Nominations for SCFL & MTI's PAC

At its February meeting, MTI Faculty Representatives nominated **David Fawcett** (Allis) to another term as an MTI Delegate to the South Central Federation of Labor and **Kati Walsh** (Randall) to fill the remainder of a vacancy on MTI's political action committee, MTI-VOTERS. The election will be held at the March 17 meeting of the Council.

## Celebrate our Public Schools on Sunday, March 8!

Have you had enough of the seemingly endless stream of negativity around public schools? **Let's get together to celebrate the positives, and continue building community engagement.** The East and La Follette Area Communities for Public Schools are hosting a family community event on **Sunday, March 8, 2-5:00 p.m., at Callahan's Sports Pub** (1902 Bartillon Dr.), to *celebrate the great work that our students and staff do every day in our schools.* The organizers are asking that teachers and support staff attend because there

will be student groups performing, and many parents, board members and public school advocates in attendance. **Wear MTI Red to celebrate Public Ed and show your support and solidarity!** These events are important and your attendance requires only that you be willing to be celebrated for the good that you do each day in your profession. Details are available on MTI's website [www.madisonteachers.org](http://www.madisonteachers.org) under Recent News.

## Attention EAs: Attend Your General Membership Meeting on March 11

Members of MTI's Educational Assistants bargaining unit (EA-MTI) will meet on **Wednesday, March 11**, commencing at **4:15 p.m.**, at **MTI Headquarters**. There are many issues of importance for EAs, NAs and SEAs to discuss, including the *future of the EA bargaining unit.*

Nominations for positions on the EA-MTI Board of Directors will also be taken at the March 11 meeting. For those who cannot attend the meeting, members may also make nominations via the nomination form that has been sent to all EA-MTI bargaining unit members, or by contacting MTI Assistant Director Eve Degen ([degene@madisonteachers.org](mailto:degene@madisonteachers.org)). Nominations will close at the March 11 meeting. ***Get involved in your Union!***

## SEE-MTI Election Results

Election results for MTI's Supportive Educational Employees bargaining unit (SEE-MTI) have been tabulated. Elected to the SEE-MTI Board of Director as a Central Office Representative is **Ann Wersal**.

## Calendar of Events

- Monday, March 2, 5:00 p.m., Doyle, BOE Instruction Work Group
- Tuesday, March 3, 4:15 p.m., MTI MTI Special Education Sub-Committee
- Wednesday, March 4, 4:15 p.m., MTI MTI Finance Committee
- Monday, March 9, 4:30 p.m., MTI MTI Board of Directors
- Monday, March 9, 5:00 p.m., Doyle, Room 103 BOE Operations Work Group
- Monday, March 9, 6:00 p.m., MTI MTI Safety Committee
- Wednesday, March 11, 4:15 p.m., MTI EA-MTI Building Reps. & General Membership
- Friday, March 13  
*PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY*
- Tuesday, March 17, 4:15 p.m., SCFL MTI Faculty Representative Council
- Friday, March 27 *End of Third Quarter*
- March 30 - April 6 *SPRING BREAK*

