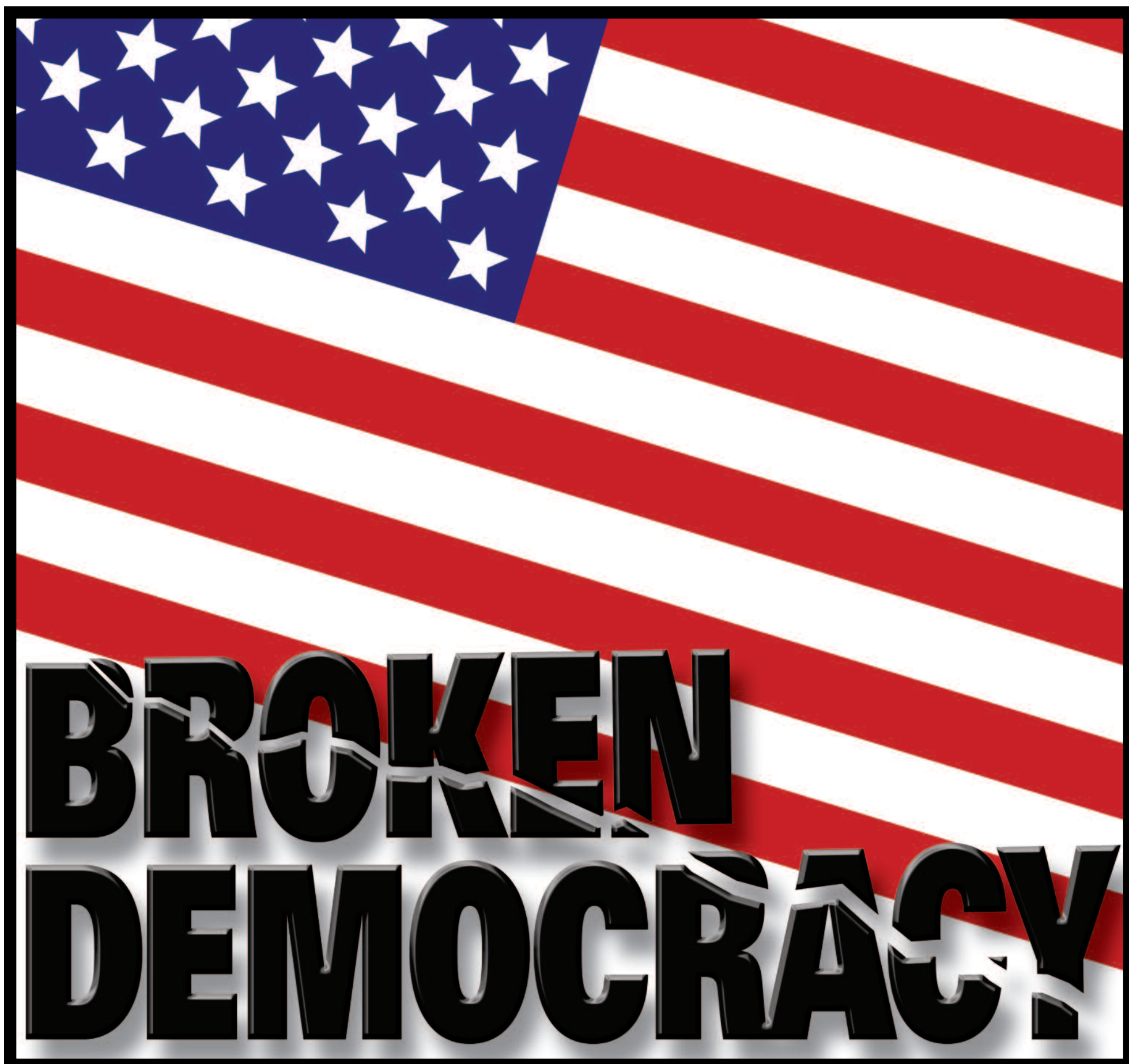


VOLUME 71, #4 • WINTER 2011

CWA news

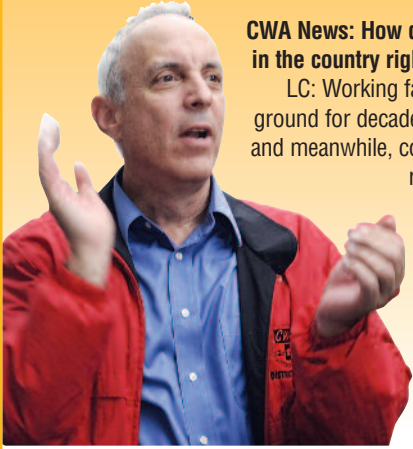
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WORKING Together

CWA President Larry Cohen on Our Broken Democracy



Larry Cohen, CWA President

CWA News: How do you see the situation in the country right now for workers?

LC: Working families have been losing ground for decades. Wages are stagnating and meanwhile, corporate profits are skyrocketing, corporations pay less taxes, and CEO compensation is higher than ever. CEOs now earn about 343 times workers' average pay and management keeps sending our jobs overseas.

CWA News: What about unionized workers?

LC: Private sector collective bargaining has been under attack for more than two decades, and today, less than 7 percent of private sector workers have bargaining rights. Bargaining a fair contract has never been harder. When workers aren't able to bargain collectively with management, wages remain stagnant and management has the power to eliminate health care, retirement security and other benefits. We cannot improve our standard of living when bargaining power is collapsing.

Public workers, about 35 percent unionized, have become the focus on this attack more recently, as we've seen in Ohio, New Jersey, Wisconsin, New Mexico and many other states.

CWA News: You have been speaking around the country and saying that our democracy is broken. What do you mean by that?

Today, there are real restrictions, or limits, on our ability to make our democracy work for all of us. Money in politics, efforts to suppress citizens' right to vote, Senate rules that endlessly delay and block debate on important issues, unfair immigration policies, all weaken our democracy.

This issue of the CWA News looks at these limits on our democracy, what they mean for working families and how CWA activists are fighting back.

CWA News: Do you think we could have gotten Employee Free Choice enacted if the Senate rules did not require a supermajority to even get the bill to the floor for debate?

LC: Absolutely. We had majority support in the Senate for Employee Free Choice, but the supermajority rules were used by senators allied with CEOs and the Chamber of Commerce to block passage, just as they were used to block the President's jobs bill that would have created needed jobs for Americans at a time of 9 percent unemployment. In the last Congress, 435 measures passed by the House were never considered on the floor of the Senate. This is not what democracy looks like.

CWA News: How do we restore our democracy?

LC: It will be tough. But I am encouraged by the activism, energy and commitment that I see across the country, in CWA locals, in our communities and among our allies. We need a broader, deeper movement, built on partnerships with groups that share our vision for a democratic America that works for all. This means working with organizations like Sierra, the NAACP, Common Cause, and others who are fighting the same fight and feeling the same frustration that we are.

The Occupy Movement has it right. We are the 99 percent. And together we can make our voices heard.

CWA News: Do you see signs of this broader movement?

LC: Yes. In the state collective bargaining fights in Ohio, New Jersey, Wisconsin and many other places, we have seen people joining together to save their communities, critical public services and jobs. In Ohio, the Stand Up coalition brought together workers, plus community groups concerned about education, housing, taxes and the environment. In Maine, citizens voted to overturn a voter suppression law.

The state battles movement has educated and engaged our members, allies and the public on workers' issues and brought new energy to our cause.

CWA News: What about Occupy Wall Street?

LC: The Occupy movements nationwide are taking a peaceful stand against corporate greed and income inequality. "We are the 99 percent" really resonates. CWA and Occupiers have marched together to support Verizon bargaining and the refusal of T-Mobile to respect workers' rights. The only way we will change America, and move forward on these core issues, is through a broad movement of activists.

CWA News: What will it take to break the gridlock in Washington, D.C.?

LC: Right now, many elected officials ignore our voices. They don't listen to civil rights activists, the elderly, environmental advocates or faith leaders either. Who do they listen to? Corporations and the wealthy, the one percent. We need to break through by standing together with allies and make sure our voices are heard. They can't ignore the 99 percent if we are united, demanding democratic change.

CWA News: I worry about the future of our children. Can we really turn things around?

LC: It's not hopeless, just hard. And we've done hard before. Our challenge is to restore the American Dream for young people and for millions of working families. I'm encouraged by the energy of the Occupy movement, by the willingness of CWA activists to step up and be a part of this campaign, by the growing public support for having the wealthiest pay their fair share and recognition that our economy will never improve if we keep attacking workers and destroying workers' rights. Together, we can restore our nation and our democracy.



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Restoring Our Democracy

ISSUES

President Obama

1. Fairer taxes
2. Infrastructure projects
3. Public services

CWA

1. Secure jobs & trade
2. Health care
3. Retirement security
4. Bargaining & Organizing rights

Partner Issues

1. Climate change
2. Dream Act
3. Foreclosures
4. other

LIMITS ON OUR DEMOCRACY BLOCK PROGRESS ON ISSUES

Campaign Finance — \$\$ out of Politics

Senate Rules

Voter Suppression

Legalization for Immigrants

7-10 YEARS TO
BREAK THROUGH

We move forward on our CWA issues — secure jobs and fair trade, health care, retirement security and bargaining and organizing — by building a coalition of workers and allies that's 50 million strong.

That's the only way to break through the wall that now limits our democracy. That's the only way to overcome the impact of corporate and secret money in politics, voter suppression, broken Senate rules and barriers to legalization for immigrants that are threatening our democracy.

Our Broken Democracy

How Corporate Money, the Attack on Voting Rights and a Broken Senate are Threatening Our Country

— *and How We're Fighting Back!*

U.S. Elections Up For Sale

In its January 2010 Citizens United decision, the U.S. Supreme Court turned election and political spending upside down. With the Court's determination that "corporations are people too," with free speech rights and other individual liberties, it eliminated the campaign spending restrictions that were put in place more than a century ago to stop corporations and other groups from exerting undue influence and spending millions of dollars and more in the electoral process.

It's true that the Supreme Court decision also allows unions and other trade associations to spend unlimited dollars and form "Super PACs," but union and association spending is dwarfed by the millions of dollars from corporations and the wealthy that are flooding into issue and candidate campaigns. And it's all done in secret because Super PACs aren't required to disclose their donors.

The 2010 midterm election campaign was the most expensive in U.S. history. Corporations alone spent \$2 billion, with hundreds of millions more spent by "independent" groups that did not disclose their donors. Of the spending by the top ten outside groups in the 2010 elections, 89 percent came from corporate-backed and radical groups like American Crossroads. More still will be spent in 2012.

Political spending limits and restrictions had been in place for more than a century, first adopted by reformers in the "Gilded Age" in 1907 to stop the owners of America's biggest banks and railroads from using their vast wealth to determine who was elected to Congress and the White House.

Those days are back. Here's what the Citizens United decision did:

- All spending limits have been lifted. Corporations, unions and associations can't give money directly to

the campaigns and can't "coordinate" with the campaigns, but can spend as much as they want.

- Corporations and other organizations can flood the public airwaves and electronic media with political

advertisements up to Election Day. In the past, these groups were banned from airing political ads 30 days before a presidential primary and 60 days before the general election.

Hey Big Spender

Who's already spending big bucks for the 2012 elections?

Organization	Total
Our Destiny PAC	\$1,455,473
House Majority PAC	\$1,401,042
American Crossroads	\$1,390,211
Make Us Great Again	\$895,230
Republican Majority Campaign	\$710,392
9-9-9 FUND	\$418,445
Senate Conservatives Fund	\$332,471
Priorities USA Action	\$306,229
Club for Growth	\$224,710

Source: FEC filing



Corporate Money in Politics

- Corporations and other groups now can use all funds for political spending instead of relying only on voluntary contributions to a political action committee.

Elections in the United States aren't supposed to be for sale to the highest bidder. But the Citizens United decision has given the upper hand to corporations and the

wealthy who have millions to spend, and it allows them to do so pretty much in total secrecy and in misleading ways.

CWA will continue to work with alliance partners like Common Cause to get corporate money out of politics and help make the American political process work for working families.

How We're Fighting Back — Corporate Money in Politics

CWA, our Legislative Political Action Teams in every district and our progressive allies are fighting back against this flood of corporate and wealthy dollars that is destroying our democratic process. Here's how.

Fighting for The Disclose Act

By passing the Disclose (Democracy is Strengthened by Casting Light on Spending in Elections) Act, Congress can take an important step toward bringing transparency into politics.

This legislation will make corporations, unions and other organizations take responsibility for their ads, just like candidates for

Congress now must stand by ads financed by their campaigns. This legislation would ensure that shareholders and members know where their money is going, block government contractors from spending taxpayer dollars on political ads, prevent foreign countries from interfering in U.S. elections and tighten the rules that restrict "coordination" between corporate/outside group spending and candidates.

In 2010, the House passed a version of the Disclose Act with these provisions, but the measure was repeatedly blocked in the U.S. Senate.

Fighting for Constitutional Amendments

It's time to make it clear that corpo-

rations are not people and overturn the Citizens United decision. House Joint Resolution 86/Senate Joint Resolution 29 and House Joint Resolutions 88 and 90 would reverse the Supreme Court decision and give Congress the authority to regulate campaign spending. House Joint Resolution 78 would clarify the authority of Congress to regulate political activities by any corporations.

Taking the Fight To the State Level

The flood of secret money in politics affects every level of government. We need state legislation that will restrict corporate spending in state elections, disclosure laws similar to the federal Disclose Act and state

level constitutional amendments that will make it clear that corporations aren't people on the state level either.

Fair Elections, Public Financing

We support legislation that will limit contributions to \$100 per contributor, with qualifying candidates receiving federal funds. S. 750 and H.R. 1404 are moving forward to bring about fair election funding. Currently, 15 states have some form of public financing; that should be expanded.

Workers' Rights Under Attack in the States

CWA members in Ohio, New Jersey, Wisconsin, New Mexico and other states are seeing a concentrated attack on the rights of working people to have a voice on the job and in the political process.

Here's what is happening in the states:

In **Ohio**, a Republican governor and Republican majority state legislature pushed through a measure that stripped public workers of their bargaining rights. Only hard work by thousands of CWA and progressive activists in getting the initiative on the November election ballot made a citizens' veto of this anti-worker measure possible.

In **New Jersey**, CWA members have been fighting back against a Republican governor and some Democratic leaders in the Senate and Assembly who agreed to strip away workers' rights to bargain over health care and pensions.

In **Wisconsin**, where the state doesn't provide for a voter referendum on legislative action, public workers have been stripped of their bargaining rights. Unions and allies are working to recall the governor and other legislators who took this extremist route.

New Mexico's governor has launched an attack on public workers, **Florida** legislators adopted a

"paycheck deception" measure that prohibits payroll deduction for any dues and restricts workers' ability to make voluntary political contributions through payroll deduction.

South Dakota and **Arizona** legislatures have restricted workers' organizing rights by making majority sign-up illegal, **Oklahoma** has wiped out bargaining rights for public workers in municipalities and counties. And the list goes on.

These attacks are the direct result of a broken political system that

allows secret money to call the shots.

A key player in this assault is the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, which is funded by some of the nation's biggest and richest companies. Included among ALEC members are some 2,000 state legislators and corporate executives who work together to draft model bills on everything from voting rights to workers' rights to environmental protections.

A new report by Common Cause, "Legislating Under the Influence:

Money, Power and the American Legislative Exchange Council," details ALEC's agenda. "ALEC is a key player in a national drive to toughen voter ID laws, successful so far in 18 states...ALEC has a lengthy list of things it opposes, including federal and state environmental regulations, the new health care reform law, state minimum wage laws and public employee unions."

Read more about ALEC at www.commoncause.org



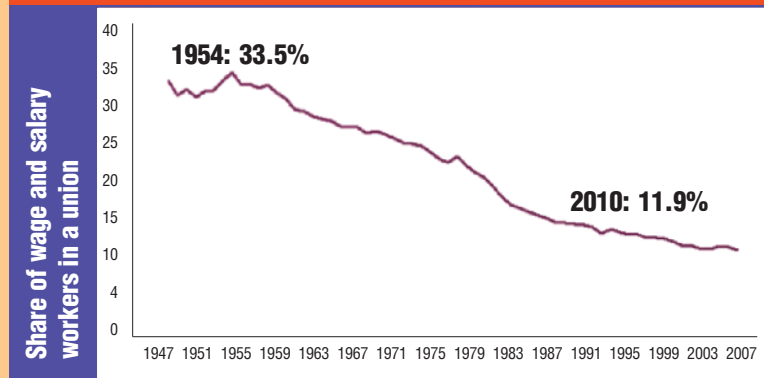
What's happening to working families?

These charts show just how working families, the 99 percent, are continuing to lose ground.

Chart 1 shows the decline in collective bargaining coverage. **Chart 2** shows the impact of that decline on workers' wages. And **Chart 3** points out the big change in who pays taxes to support the federal government. Corporate taxes: way down, from 27.3 percent in 1955 to 8.9 percent last year.

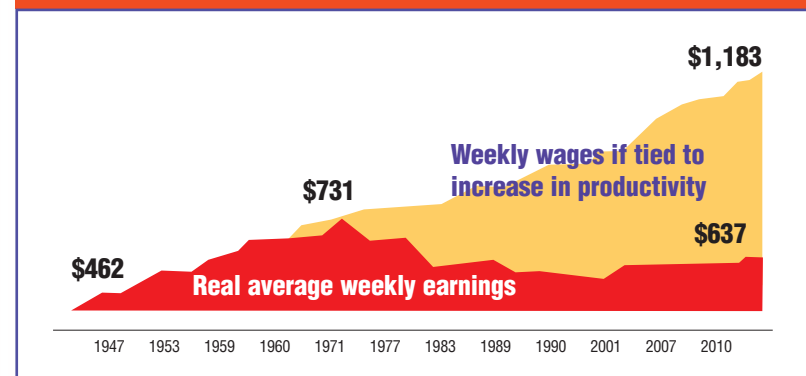
CHART 1: U.S. collective bargaining coverage declines slowly and then more quickly

U.S. Collective Bargaining Coverage, 1947-2010



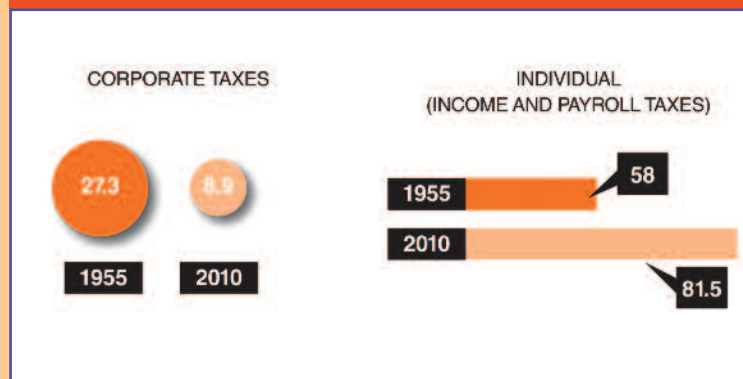
Source: John DiNardo. "The Casual Effect of Labor Unions in the U.S. Context."

CHART 2: How American workers got left behind: Actual wages compared to estimated increases if they had risen with productivity

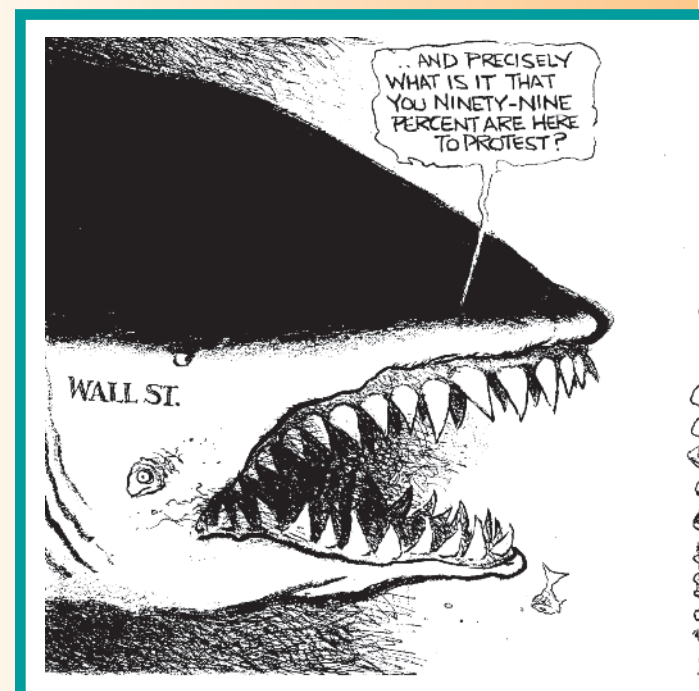


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics — Productivity, Average Wage of Non-Supervisory Production Workers, Consumer Price Index

CHART 3: Tax Fairness — Taxes as Percentage of Federal Revenue



Source: White House Office of Management and Budget <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals>



Reported Lobbying Expenses and Campaign Contributions, 1999-2010

Corporate spending
\$32.365 BILLION

Union spending
\$872 million

From 1998 to 2010, Big Business has spent 37 times the amount of money in lobbying and campaign contributions. The Citizens United decision makes this gap even bigger.

Source: Center for Responsive Politics/OpenSecrets.org



Credit: Getty Images

How Redistricting Can Block The Democratic Process

Every 10 years, following the U.S. Census, congressional and state legislative districts are redrawn in every state.

What's happening today? In some states, legislatures are deliberately splitting communities with common interests to dilute their impact on elections. That limits democracy.

Voters in some states have established independent redistricting commissions that look to draw fair boundaries that don't favor either political party.

In **California**, new district maps drawn by the Independent California Citizens Redistricting Commission overcame two court challenges and will take effect June 2012.

In **Arizona**, Governor Jan Brewer continues to fight the Independent Redistricting Commission established by voters. Brewer tried to fire the commission chair because she didn't like the committee's results, but the state Supreme Court blocked that action.

In **Texas**, legislators tried to

intentionally divide the growing Latino population by splitting that community in the Dallas-Fort Worth region seven ways. A federal court overruled that action.

In **Florida**, a ballot measure passed by citizens last year requires that congressional districts be compact and contiguous, respect natural and political boundaries as much as possible and not favor either party. The state Senate has just released a draft congressional map; the U.S. Dept. of Justice will review.

How We're Fighting Back — Redistricting

There are 24 states that allow ballot initiatives and CWA activists are working to use this process to reform the system.

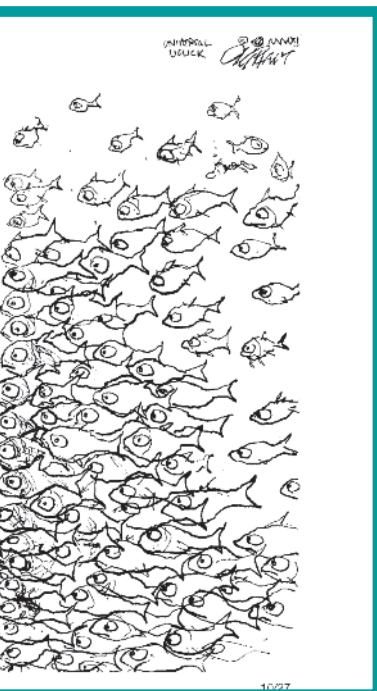
The states are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

We're also fighting back against proposals in some states to change the distribution of electoral votes that determine who is elected to the presidency.

Pennsylvania legislators have just backed off a plan that would have split up that state's 21 electoral votes.

In 2008, President Obama carried the state of Pennsylvania by more than 600,000. That gave him the state's 21 electoral votes, a critical number in a critical swing state.

But some Republican legislators wanted to change the system and award electoral votes based on how the candidates fared in each congressional district. Under that plan, President Obama would have received just 11 electoral votes, despite decisively winning the state by a 56-44 percent margin.



OLIPHANT (c) 2011 Universal Uclick. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Other Voices

Income inequality tied to decline in unions

A 2011 study by two Harvard economists found that the steep drop off in unionization in the United States is one of the primary causes of the decline of the middle class.

"Deunionization explains a fifth of the inequality increase for women, and a third for men. The decline of organized labor among men contributes as much to rising wage inequality as the growing stratification of pay by education.

"For generations, unions were the core institution advocating for more equitable wage distribution. Today, when unions—at least in the private sector—have largely disappeared, that means that this voice for equity has faded dramatically. People now have very different ideas about what's acceptable in terms of pay distribution.

"In the early 1970s when one in three workers were organized, unions were often prominent voices for equity, not just for their members, but for all workers. Union decline marks an erosion of the moral economy and its underlying distributional norms. Wage inequality in the nonunion sector increased as a result."

The study is "Union Decline Accounts for Much of the Rise in Wage Inequality."

Restore the Basic Bargain

By Robert Reich

For most of the last century, the basic bargain at the heart of the American economy was that employers paid their workers enough to buy what American employers were selling.

That basic bargain created a virtuous cycle of higher living standards, more jobs, and better wages.

Back in 1914, Henry Ford announced he was paying workers on his Model T assembly line \$5 a day — three times what the typical factory employee earned at the time. The Wall Street Journal termed his action "an economic crime."

But Ford knew it was a cunning business move. The higher wage turned Ford's auto workers into customers who could afford to buy Model T's. In two years Ford's profits more than doubled.

That was then. Now, Ford Motor Company is paying its new hires half what it paid new employees a few years ago. The basic bargain is over — not only at Ford but all over the American economy.

New data from the Commerce Department shows employee pay is now down to the smallest share of the economy since the government began collecting wage and salary data in 1929. Meanwhile, corporate profits now constitute the largest share of the economy since 1929.

1929, by the way, was the year of the Great Crash that ushered in the Great Depression.

The latest data on corporate profits and wages show we haven't learned the essential lesson: When the economy becomes too lopsided — disproportionately benefitting corporate owners and top executives rather than average workers — it tips over.

Incredibly, some politicians think the best way to restart the nation's job engine is to make corporations even more profitable and the rich even richer. These same politicians think average workers should have even less money in their pockets. They don't want to extend the payroll tax cut or unemployment benefits. And they want to make it harder for workers to form unions.

These politicians have reality upside down.

Corporations don't need more money. They have so much money right now they don't even know what to do with all of it. They're even buying back their own shares of stock. This is a bonanza for CEOs whose pay is tied to stock prices and it increases the wealth of other shareholders. But it doesn't create a single new job and it doesn't raise the wages of a single employee.

Nor do the wealthiest Americans need more money. The top 1 percent is already taking in more than 20 percent of total income — the highest since the 1920s.

Former Labor Secretary Robert Reich teaches public policy at the University of California, Berkeley.

The Attack on Voting Rights

Right to Vote Threatened for Millions of Eligible Citizens

Many state legislatures have been working overtime to pass laws to restrict the rights of more than 5 million Americans — mostly students, people of color, lower income citizens, people with disabilities and senior citizens — to vote in the 2012 elections.

From voter ID requirements to severe limits on voter registration, 14 states so far in 2011 have passed laws that threaten to have a “significant impact” on the 2012 presidential race and other state and federal elections, according to the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University.

And that’s just the beginning: 34 states have introduced state-issued photo ID requirements; 12 are seeking proof of citizenship; 13 are restricting voter registration and nine are reducing early and absentee

voting.

Why? The stated reason is “voter fraud,” but numerous studies, including five years of research by the Bush Justice Department, find virtually no evidence of voter fraud and only a handful of mistakes that have allowed ineligible votes.

The real reason is to suppress the votes of elderly, young, low income and minority groups.

Nearly 200 House Democrats have signed a letter to election officials in states nationwide, expressing deep concern about voter ID and other threats to voting rights:

“Whether it is an elderly woman unable to locate her birth certificate for purposes of establishing her U.S. citizenship on election day or a college student whose school-issued identification is not among

College students “vote liberal. They don’t have life experience and they just vote their feelings.”

— New Hampshire Republican Speaker of the House Bill O’Brien, pushing legislation in early 2011 to block students from establishing residency, which would give them voting rights.

the IDs deemed acceptable for voting or a disabled veteran whose local polling place has not yet been made accessible, public officials on all levels of government should be striving to facilitate their right to vote, not make it more difficult.”



**Voter
Suppression**

“The right to vote is precious — almost sacred — and one of the most important blessings of our democracy. Today, we must stand up and fight. The history of the right to vote in America is a history of conflict, of struggle, for that right. Many people died trying to protect that right. I was beaten and jailed because I stood up for it. For millions like me, the struggle for the right to vote is not mere history, it is experience.”

— U.S. Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) on the House floor, Nov. 1, 2011

The Truth about ‘Voter Fraud’

From 2002 to 2007, when the Bush administration ordered its U.S. attorney generals in every state to look for and prosecute cases of voter fraud, only 120 people had been charged nationwide, with **just 86 convictions, out of the 300 million votes cast.**

Many of those cases involved errors, not deliberate fraud, by people “who appear to have mistakenly filled out registration forms or misunderstood eligibility rules, a review of court records and interviews with prosecutors and defense lawyers show,” the New York Times reported in 2007.

Claims about double-voting are grossly exaggerated. In New Jersey, claims by both parties suggested that 4,397 people voted twice in the 2004 elections. Brennan Center analysis found that name, birth date and other data errors accounted for virtually all the alleged fraud. Only eight cases were substantiated, out of 3.6 million votes cast.

In Missouri, allegations of fraud were rampant after the 2000 election, but Brennan’s investigation found only six actual cases out of 2.36 million votes cast.

In Wisconsin, the third state Brennan examined, the extent of voter fraud in 2004 was seven illegal votes out of nearly 3 million cast.

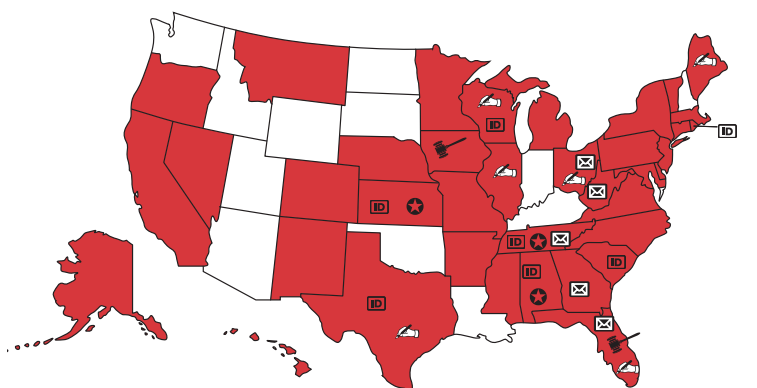
In Texas, state Attorney General Greg Abbott spent \$1.4 million on a two-year crusade to crack down on fraud in pursuit of a voter ID law. The probe yielded 26 cases, only eight of which were fraud. In the others, Abbott charged 18 volunteers, mostly senior citizens, who helped homebound neighbors by mailing their sealed ballots. Their crime? Not signing the envelopes.

Brennan Center researchers stress that requiring photo ID at the polls wouldn’t have made a difference in any of the tiny handful of fraud cases it substantiated for the 2007 report, “The Truth About Voter Fraud.”

“Photo ID laws are effective only in preventing individuals from impersonating other voters — an occurrence more rare than getting struck by lightning,” the report states. “The voter fraud phantom drives policy that disenfranchises actual, legitimate voters.”

Go to the Brennan Center’s Truth About Fraud website, www.truthaboutfraud.org, for many resources on voter fraud allegations and facts.

Tracking the Assaults by States



- Photo ID required
- Proof of citizenship
- Executive action makes it harder to restore voting rights
- Legislation introduced
- Voter registration restrictions
- Early voting/absentee voting restrictions

Source: Brennan Center for Justice, www.brennancenter.org

“I don’t want everybody to vote. As a matter of fact, our leverage in the elections quite candidly goes up as the voting populace goes down.”

— the late, conservative activist Paul Weyrich in 1980. Today, the Weyrich-founded and Koch brothers-funded American Legislative Exchange Council is writing the state legislation that is making Weyrich’s vision of voter suppression a reality.

Fighting Back to Defend Voting Rights

CWA and allies are fighting back in the states to repeal restrictive voter ID laws and to safeguard measures that encourage and support citizens in voting: early voting, voting by mail, same day voter registration and broad voter registration efforts.

This year, at least six states introduced legislation imposing severe restrictions on voter registration drives organized by non-partisan groups like the League of Women Voters and Rock the Vote. In Florida,

the restrictions and penalties are so severe that the League of Women Voters, which has registered voters for 91 years, has ended its drives because volunteers could face fines and penalties. Florida set fines of \$500 to \$1,000 for each form that contains any mistakes, such as misspellings or typos, or aren’t turned in within 48 hours of collection.

Also under attack: early voting, which is used heavily by working families, voting by mail and same day voter registration.

In Florida, the early voting period was cut in half, to eight days. In Ohio, early voting was cut from 35 days to 11 days. And more states, including West Virginia, Georgia and Tennessee have passed laws restricting early voting.

Some early successes:

In Ohio, voters will have the final say on the restrictions on voting rights that the state legislature adopted. CWA activists have been collecting signatures to make sure this measure gets on the 2012 ballot.

Voter ID: Not as Simple as It Seems

About 21 million American adults don't have a government-issued photo identification card, or can't get access to one. They include:

- More than 6 million senior citizens. In Georgia, for example, the AARP says 36 percent of people over age 75 don't have photo ID.
- About 25 percent of voting-age African-American citizens, or 5.5 million people.
- About 15 percent of lower-income citizens. Citizens earning less than \$35,000 are twice as likely to lack valid ID as people earning more than \$35,000.
- About 18 percent of young voters.

College students in a growing number of states are finding that their voting rights are being restrict-

ed. In Tennessee, South Carolina and Texas, new laws bar students from voting with university-issued ID. A similar law in Wisconsin has schools scrambling to help students by issuing new voter ID-compliant student identification. Other states are also considering new ID requirements and other restrictions on students' voting rights.

Depending on the state, fees can range from a few dollars to more than \$40 for a basic photo ID. But getting those IDs — even in a few states that are providing them for free — requires a birth certificate. If yours isn't handy, you'll have to track down and purchase a copy from the state where you were born, a process that can be costly, burdensome and nearly impossible for some.

Defending Students' Right to Vote

The Fair Elections Legal Network is looking to help voters survive the new, tough restrictions on voter identification requirements passed by a number of states. The group particularly focuses attention on states looking to limit student access to voting. This year, Wisconsin passed the most restrictive law in the country.

Read more at www.fairelectionsnetwork.com

Maine Citizens Keep Early Registration

In Maine, voters approved a citizens' veto of a law that would have taken away same-day voter registration by a 60 percent vote.

The Maine legislature voted to eliminate same day registration in June, but volunteers gathered enough signatures for a November referendum.

Maine legislators pitched the same old story — restrictions were needed to fight against "voter fraud." Except there hasn't been any voter fraud. The Boston Globe

reported that in 2010, Maine registered 60,000 new votes on Election Day with no proven claims of voter fraud. In the 38 years of same-day registration in the state, there have only been two cases of voter fraud, the ACLU reported.

But Maine legislators aren't ready to throw in the towel just yet, with some looking to pass a restrictive voter ID law. Maine citizens, stay tuned.

Dorothy Cooper's Story

96-year-old Dorothy Cooper is proud to say she's managed to vote in every election except one in the 70-plus years she's been eligible.

This fall, wanting to make sure she had the proper identification required by Tennessee's new voter ID law, she went to a state office to apply. As the Chattanooga Times Press reported, she brought "a recent rent receipt, a copy of her lease, her voter registration card and her birth certificate."

That wasn't good enough. The clerk said unless Cooper could produce her marriage certificate, she'd be ineligible for a new ID and unable to vote at her polling place, even though everyone there has known her for years.

Mrs. Cooper said she never had any problems exercising her rights, even before the Voting Rights Act was passed in 1965. Until now.

What the Broken Senate Rules Mean For Working Families

- No Employee Free Choice Act
- No jobs bill
- No appointments to the National Labor Relations Board, because they won't be confirmed.
- No consideration of 435 bills passed by the House in the last session of Congress.

And the Latest Senate Rules Outrages

Jobs

With a series of filibusters and blocked votes, Senate Republicans are keeping President Obama's jobs plan from ever coming to the Senate floor. At a time of 9 percent unemployment, Senate Republicans are refusing to even debate the merits of the plan.

President Obama initially proposed a \$447 billion jobs plan, to save jobs of teachers and firefighters, rebuild crumbling bridges and highways and help get our economy moving. Even when the Senate tried to consider just portions of the bill, the super majority rules prevented debate.

Tax increase for working families

Unless the Senate acts in time, come Jan. 1, working families and small businesses will be hit with a payroll tax increase. What's the hold up? Senate Republicans, again, are refusing to let a measure extending the "tax holiday" that was passed a year ago come to the floor for debate and a vote. Why? Because it would be paid for by increasing taxes on incomes above \$1 million.

Senator Jon Coryn of Texas said the payroll tax cut has a "detrimental" effect on the economy. Mitt Romney, a candidate for the Republican presidential nomination, opposes extending the tax cuts because they're just a "temporary little Band-Aid." Apparently some Senators and others think tax increases are okay as long as working families pay them, not millionaires.

For a family earning \$50,000 a year, this would mean a tax increase of about \$1,000.

Broken Senate



Top Ten Reasons Why The U.S. Senate is Broken

1. Debate and speeches that might never end unless a super majority of at least 60 senators agree to hold a vote.
2. Endless debate over whether to debate. Senators must unanimously (all 100) agree to consider a bill.
3. Endless debate over whether to negotiate differences with a House version. Senators have three opportunities to filibuster this process.
4. Forced debate even after a filibuster is ended. Senate rules require 30 hours of debate for every motion, whether it's the motion to proceed, the motion to end debate, or real discussion of the bill's merits.
5. Secret anonymous holds that stop Senate business.
6. Forcing a roll call vote on everything, to tie up the Senate and prevent real work from getting done.
7. Frivolous points of order. Another way to tie up the Senate and stop real work.
8. Frivolous or "poison pill" amendments. The rules allow any senator to offer any amendment, whether or not it relates to the issue under discussion.
9. Reading amendments aloud. Unless every senator agrees — that unanimous consent requirement again — each amendment must be read aloud.
10. Senate committees have their own rules that delay the process even more.

Get This 99 Percent Bumper Sticker!

Get your free "I am the 99 Percent" bumper sticker now. Go to www.cwa-union.org/sticker and put in personal ID number.

Available to first 20,000 people who request one, until Jan. 31, 2012.



Building Our Movement: CWA and Occupy

'Now is the time to help grow this movement'

Madelyn Elder is president of CWA Local 7901 and an at-large executive board member.

About 23 of us, from CWA, Letter Carriers, Laborers, SEIU, and retired teachers led the march of about 400 people. We sat down on the east side of the Steel Bridge behind the police lines and chanted slogans like "Hey hey, ho ho, Corporate Greed has got to go."

Police started arresting the 23 of us, while the rest of the demonstrators marched across the Burnside Bridge to meet up with the Portland State University and Occupy Portland marchers.

I got a citation and was released on my own recognizance, so it was on to Shut Down the Banks Day.

Among the thousands demonstrating were Teamsters and Jobs with Justice activists alongside grandparents, children, clowns and so many others. We went to Wells Fargo, US Bank, Chase Bank, and Bank of America, all of which were bailed out while the 99% were laid off and sold out.

I volunteered to be arrested because now is the time to participate and help grow this movement. The 99% are taking back what we have lost in terms of the working class in this country. We can change it all now if we just commit ourselves to keeping the Occupy movement growing.

'At the end, I really didn't want to stop'

Patti Cumo is a retired member of CWA Local 1118.

We had so much support during our march against corporate greed. Verizon thinks that what we did was "theatrics," but all along the 156 miles, we had people opening up their windows in their homes, rolling down their car windows, and yelling, "Thank you, guys."



Portland

San Francisco



The march was strenuous. Being 60, not an athlete, and having a really short gait, I had to push myself to keep up my pace with the others.

I really learned about myself on the march, and the biggest joy was getting to know each other. At the end, I really didn't want to stop, but remain with our group of eight.

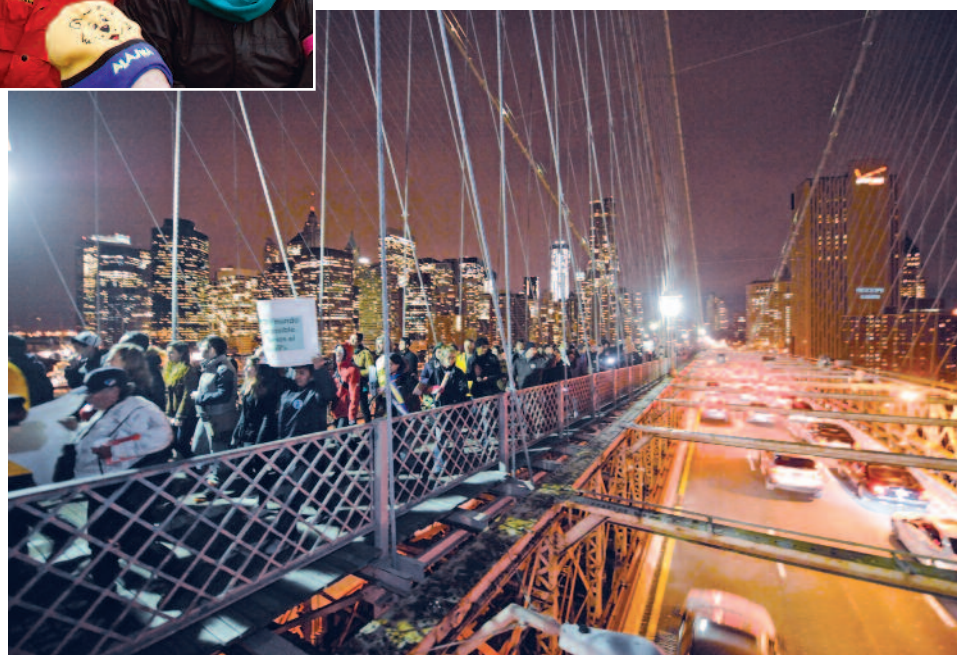
'I experienced a sense of community that I will never forget'

Mike Gendron is a member of Local 1108

After a rally and march on Verizon and Verizon Wireless, I joined with about 18 CWA members who spent the night in Zuccotti Park with the Occupy Wall Street activists. It really was unifying experience for me. I experienced a sense of community that I will never forget.

Some people have gotten the wrong idea about the Occupy activists and their movement. Back in the park, they carved out a space for us, their union guests for the night. I'd brought a few layers of clothing, a sleeping bag and a blanket, but it was many hours before I wanted to go to sleep. There was so much to talk about. The people I talked with really understood our issues, and I heard many positive comments about labor unions. They have many issues that they're concerned with — student loans, finding jobs, facing foreclosure. We all want the same thing: fairness and the opportunity to advance and provide for ourselves and our families. All of us are fighting for economic justice.

Credit: Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian



Brooklyn Bridge

Credit: AP Photo