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Walker Calls the Loss of 13,000 Jobs and Over 800 Million Dollars a “Victory”

Milwaukee – During a press conference last week, Governor-elect Scott Walker called the loss of federal high-speed rail funding a “victory.” The loss costs Wisconsin 13,000 much-needed jobs and 808 million dollars that would have funded the state’s economic development.

“Walker doesn’t understand what Wisconsinites need,” said Mike Thomas, President of SEIU Wisconsin State Council. “He has continuously proven he is incapable of understanding the struggles of working families. This so-called ‘victory’ is in no way a victory for the 44,146 unemployed workers of Wisconsin.”

Over 200 concerned citizens gathered at Milwaukee’s City Hall on Monday to voice their anger over the loss of high-speed rail jobs.

“If Walker can throw away 13,000 good jobs before he is sworn into office, what is he going to do after he’s sworn in?” asked Jackie McElroy, a Healthcare Wisconsin member who attended Monday’s rally. “It is totally unacceptable for him to decide that we don’t need those jobs. People all over the state are hurting from layoffs and lost benefits. It’s time to bring jobs back to Wisconsin, not throw them away.”

The loss of rail funding wasn’t the only blow to Wisconsin workers last week. Walker also spoke about reducing bargaining rights for public employees as a way to avoid paying for their benefits. Walker even suggested decertification as a way to eliminate public employee unions.

“It’s time for the hate to stop,” said Thomas. “Public employees need fair pay, safe working conditions, and full benefits just like everyone else. Walker’s attacks are unjustifiable and won’t help the hardworking families that keep Wisconsin’s economy moving forward. If Walker wants to play rough, he can expect a long battle.”

SEIU Wisconsin State Council coordinates the legislative and political agenda of Wisconsin’s seven SEIU locals. SEIU is the nation’s largest and fastest growing union with 2.1 million members nationwide and 17,000 members in Wisconsin. For more information visit www.seiuwi.org.

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