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Contact: Laura Kendellen
(O) 414.727.6364 x10

Wisconsin Act 10 Takes Effect

Public Employees Brace for Cuts to Pay, Benefits and Workplace Rights

Milwaukee – Today, the controversial Wisconsin Act 10 takes effect, stripping 175,000 state and local employees of their right to collectively bargain. While employees working with a contract will not be affected by the law until their contract expires, the law immediately affects at least 22,000 state workers, 4,000 municipal employees and about half the state's teachers unions.

In addition to an average 8% pay cut, workers will suffer cuts to take-home pay used to cover health care and pension costs, will no longer be able to pay union dues through payroll, will be required to vote on their union certification annually, and will not be allowed to negotiate on anything except salary including vacations, sick pay, seniority preferences, overtime, grievance procedures, and workplace safety.

“The law goes above and beyond what Walker insists is the purpose of the bill,” said Mike Thomas, SEIU Wisconsin State Council president. “It has become obvious to political leaders, workers, and the general public that this bill was not written to save the state money, but to dismantle the movement that helped shape the policies that have protected both private and public employees for decades.”

On June 14, the state Supreme Court ruled that the legislature did not violate the open meetings law when it passed the collective bargaining bill on March 9. The ruling overturned Judge Sumi's permanent injunction filed on May 26 and creates a dangerous precedent, allowing the Wisconsin legislature to continue passing anti-worker, anti-family legislation illegally.

“This is a huge step backward for our state,” continued Thomas. “But Wisconsinites are ready to move the state forward by voting for change in the upcoming recall elections and the 2012 elections.”

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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