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Resistance Erupts in Wisconsin: Stop the Union-Busting & the Cuts!

EDITORIAL

As we go to press, recently elected Republican Governor Scott Walker in Wisconsin is scrambling to pass his Budget Repair Bill. This bill would effectively destroy public sector unions in Wisconsin and gut the benefits of 200,000 Wisconsin public sector employees (such as healthcare and state pension contributions).

Walker tried to rush the vote on the bill in less than a week from when it was first introduced without public hearings. At this writing, the 14 Democrats in the State Senate have all left Wisconsin to prevent a vote on the bill. Walker is one vote shy of carrying the bill in the Wisconsin Senate. He is hoping to arm-twist one Democrat into supporting the bill, with no defections in his own Republican ranks.

Working people across the country, particularly union members and students are watching Wisconsin and pledging their full solidarity with the struggle. If this bill is passed in Wisconsin, everyone understands that similar legislation will be introduced in other states.

At this point, given the mass upsurge that has developed across the state and nationwide in opposition to this offensive, it is far from certain that Governor Walker will get his way, as a couple of the state's Republicans are wavering. The politicians cannot ignore the huge and growing mobilizations. Students have walked out of their classrooms and workers off their jobs, as was the case with the K-12 students and teachers in 10 public school districts in Southern Wisconsin. On February 19, more than 70,000 people took to the streets and packed into the Capitol dome.

Thousands have also waged a mass sit-in/occupation of the State Capitol, with hundreds staying there round the clock.

Stop the Budget Cuts!

The organized labor movement has under-

LAST MINUTE: Wisconsin's South Central Fed. of Labor Issues General Strike Warning



The 97-union South Central Federation of Labor, representing 45,000 workers in Madison and South Central Wisconsin, went on record Monday, February 21, as opposing all provisions contained in Walker's "Budget Repair Bill." It also voted to endorse preparations for a general strike.

While this is just a threat at this point and not a call to go out on general strike, the decision is a tremendous step forward. There have been only a handful of general strikes in U.S. history and none since the Taft-Hartley Act outlawed them in 1947. So the mere talk of a general strike is dramatic in itself. To mount such a strike would take much effort and courage, but if shutting down the economy is what is needed to get Gov. Walker's bill repealed, without compromises, then that's what labor needs to do — both in Wisconsin and the rest of the country. — Ed.

scored the huge stakes in the fight in Wisconsin and in 10 other "battleground" states, where Republican governors are seeking to smash the trade unions through the introduction of "right-to-work" laws and/or

the destruction of collective-bargaining agreements. They point out that if these attacks are not defeated, the labor movement

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