

U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.)
Co-Chair, House Democratic Steering and Policy Committee
Prepared Remarks for the Hearing on “*The State-by-State and Congressional
Assaults on Workers’ Rights and the Middle Class*”
Tuesday, March 8, 2011

Good afternoon.

I would like to welcome members and witnesses to this Steering and Policy Committee hearing. Today’s hearing will examine the recent attacks on workers’ rights that are being waged across the country, from state capitols to right here in this Capitol.

We will hear testimony from workers on the frontlines. They and other experts will explain what these attacks mean for families, the middle class, and our economic future.

While the assault on the rights of public service workers in Wisconsin is getting the most attention, we are learning that it is just one front in a broad anti-worker agenda.

These campaigns against workers appear to be well-financed. They use both real and manufactured crises as an excuse to attack teachers, firefighters, police, and other public servants, as well as private sector workers.

Under the guise of cutting deficits, they say, working people’s right to bargain for a better life must be eliminated. Under the guise of fixing the economy, they say, wages must be cut, training opportunities taken away, and health and safety protections rolled back.

In reality, these attacks have nothing to do with cutting deficits or fixing the economy. They are driven by ideology and special interests, not sound economic policy.

They are designed to take power away from working people.

And even though workers did not trigger this recession. Even though they have already made deep sacrifices. Even though the well-off and well-connected seem

to never get asked to make a sacrifice. The demands for American workers to give up more, and more, and more, just keep coming.

Bills are moving through the U.S. House or the state legislatures demanding workers sacrifice:

- Rights that **guarantee a decent wage.**
- Rights that **ensure a safe workplace.**
- Rights that provide **access to affordable health care.**
- And, yes, even the right of working people to join together to bargain for a better life.

Today, the Steering and Policy Committee will hear testimony directly from the very Americans who stand to lose the most from rolling back these workplace rights.

We will also learn of the economic consequences for all Americans if these anti-worker campaigns are successful.

I firmly believe that workers rights built our nation's middle class in the last century and made the United States the greatest economic power in the history of the world.

In these fights over workers' rights, our economic future is at stake. Indeed, the character of our country is at stake.

I thank all the witnesses for joining us today and we look forward to your testimony.

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