

**Gov. Walker Admits Attacks on Unions Unrelated to State Budget**

Cummings, Democrats Defend American Workers

Washington, DC - The continued attack on American workers and public employee pensions in statehouses and now on Capitol Hill suffered a huge blow at today's Committee hearing on state and municipal debt.

Committee Democrats presented a barrage of evidence that refuted the Republican claims that middle-class American workers are to blame for fiscal woes, and forced the majority's witness, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker, to admit under oath that his campaign to dismantle workers' rights did nothing to improve the state's budget situation.

"I strongly oppose efforts to falsely blame middle-class American workers for these current economic problems," said Ranking Member Cummings. "Working America, firefighters, teachers and nurses - are not responsible for the reckless actions of Wall Street, which led to this crisis in the first place. I also strongly object to efforts by politicians who try to use the current economic downturn to strip American workers of their rights - the right to negotiate working conditions that are safe, the right to negotiate due process protections against being fired arbitrarily, and the right to negotiate fair pay for an honest day's work."

Walker defended further attacks on state workers' collective bargaining rights, even after state unions agreed to his financial demands. But he admitted under questioning that his extreme demands will have no impact on the state's budget shortfall. He was confronted directly by Congressman Dennis Kucinich (OH-10):

Kucinich: "Your proposal would require unions to hold annual votes to continue representing their own members. Can you please explain to me how much money this provision saves for your state budget?"

Walker: "That particular part doesn't save any."

Kucinich also confronted Walker with a budget [analysis](#) issued by Wisconsin's Legislative Fiscal Bureau, a nonpartisan state budget agency, concluding that the Governor's efforts to repeal the rights of state workers is a non-fiscal policy item that has no effect on the state budget shortfall. When asked a second time to quantify how much money repealing workers' rights would yield the state's treasury, Walker had no answer. According to press reports, Walker has refused to even meet with union leaders to hear their concerns, but he has been on a national fundraising tour this week to raise money for recalled Republican State Senators.

Governor Peter Shumlin of Vermont, a state facing a \$175 million budget shortfall, testified that "the question is are you going to bring people together to solve problems or are you going to go after an assault on a basic principle in America which is collective bargaining," Shumlin said of Walker's plan. "If you want to go after collective bargaining just come out and say it, 'Hey we're taking you on.'"

Cummings characterized the hearing as a study in contrast between a Governor who worked with local workers to reform the pension system, and another who stripped and weakened workers rights even after the unions agreed to his financial demands. "In my opinion, it is shameful to play politics with American workers and their families," said Cummings. "We should be helping these workers, not attacking them, because they are the engine and the author of the American recovery."

Congressman Gerald Connolly (VA-11) also submitted an analysis by the National Association of State Retirement Administrators that found that "less than three percent of all state and local government spending was used to fund public pension benefits." "On average, states *with* collective bargaining rights for public employees have 2.5% *less*

debt than states without those rights, relative to the size of their respective budgets,” said Connolly.

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