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The class war against labor

By PW Editorial



We are in the midst now of nothing less than a full-fledged class war against America's working people. That war was declared more than two years ago by an array of powerful right wing groups including the Chamber of Commerce, the National Manufacturers Association, the Club for Growth, Americans for Prosperity, the Heritage Foundation and the American Legislative Exchange Council, among others.

The people directly firing the shots at the U.S. working class are an array of state lawmakers bought and paid for by these organizations. They are waging an unprecedented attack on basic workers rights, and they only began that attack by going after unions. Their true aim has always been to crush the vast majority of workers in this country, the majority who are not in unions.

Just a few examples from a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute show how the stepped up class warfare of the 1 percent against the 99 percent began and how that warfare continues to intensify:

We all remember the massive attack on collective bargaining rights that began with Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin several years ago.

Since then four states have passed laws either killing or restricting state minimum wage rules.

Four states have lifted restrictions on child labor.

Sixteen states have sharply reduced benefits for the unemployed and/or restricted the groups of people for whom those benefits are available.

States have stripped workers of overtime pay rights, repealed sick leave protection, killed workplace safety laws and even passed laws making it virtually impossible for a worker to sue a boss for race or sex discrimination.

T H I S W E E K :

- **The class war against labor**
- **Boehner blocks immigration vote**
- **Detroit's Fox 2, unfair to working families**
- **NASA estudiará atmósfera de Marte con nueva nave**
- **Sen. Davis registers candidacy for governor**

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As you read this there are efforts underway to pass laws making it impossible to recover unpaid wages even when those wages have been stolen by employers. In some states laws are already in effect that forbid cities and counties in those states from establishing higher minimum wages or insti-

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tuting sick leave benefits that are stronger than those in place in the state as a whole.

The organizations that have paid for this attack on basic worker's rights include business lobbyists like the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers. Those two groups are not new tea party formations. They are "as old as the hills," so to speak and they continue to push the war against workers by supporting both "traditional" and "tea party" Republicans and even, at times, certain Democrats.

Then we have the newer groups like the Club for Growth and Americans for Prosperity. With the help of obedient followers who hold the majority of Supreme Court positions, these organizations have broken new ground for the right wing corporate interests by taking advantage of the law to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into right wing political coffers - often into the coffers of the worst tea party extremists.

Then too there are groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council who make sure that, once in office, the lawmakers bought and paid for

by the one percent are supplied with the legislative tools they need to implement the right-wing agenda.

Labor and its allies must and actually are beginning to mount their own push to respond to these attacks on workers. We support this response and urge everyone to give their support too. Labor and its allies are targeting more state legislative races this year. Let all these state lawmakers be warned. The continued attack on the living standards of workers will not be tolerated. Nor will any attempts to weaken Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid. Nor will the people tolerate any further threats to hold the nation hostage by shutting down the government.

The round of elections just over earlier this month showed many gains for working people. They are not content to simply lie down in the face of warfare conducted against them. They showed that they will fight back. We all must do everything possible to continue and strengthen that fight in 2014 - to make sure we win this war we never asked for.

Boehner blocks immigration vote

By PW Editorial

Once again John Boehner, the Republican House Speaker, has allowed a rightwing extremist cabal in Congress to control the fate of important legislation.

Bowing once again to the wishes of the tea party, he has refused to put immigration reform to a vote in the House, all but guaranteeing that the comprehensive bill passed in the Senate will go nowhere for the foreseeable future.

Boehner's decision shows his total inability to lead his party to do the right thing in immigration reform, as his leadership has shown time and again in the past the total inability of the GOP to do the right thing on any matter important to working people or their allies.

Republicans are saying this week that there was no time left to tackle immigration reform this year.

Yet they have found plenty of time to start phony hearings on the problems with the Obamacare rollout. Boehner himself has found time to

bring to the floor and pass with almost unanimous Republican support a bill that would deport DREAM-eligible young people.

Every day 1,100 people are being deported - ripped out of their homes, away from their families and off their jobs. At the end of another year of this human tragedy the Republicans have nothing to show for themselves but additional disgraceful action that only adds to the human misery. The Boehner decision hurts the economy too, and therefore all Americans, by keeping millions of productive people in the shadows. These people are in every way, except on paper, fellow Americans.

The peoples' movements must not give up the fight until our lawmakers finally pass immigration reform.

A first step would be to let Boehner know personally about the misery he is causing. Support the campaign by United We Dream to make 1,100 calls to Boehner. Beyond that, we will make sure they pay the price on Election Day in 2014.

We will make sure they pay the price on Election Day.

Detroit's Fox 2, unfair to working families

By John Rummel

An early Christmas party at a local furniture store became the rally site for workers of Fox 2 television. Media outlets were invited to the gala event and broadcast workers took the opportunity to bring attention to the news organization's refusal to bargain in good faith.

"It is not looking like a very good Christmas for us so we hope we can put a damper on theirs," said Brian Moore, President of Local 43, National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians - Communication Workers of America (NABET-CWA) as he walked last week along the busy road in front of the store. He carried a sign saying "Turn off Fox 2, unfair to working families." The honking of car horns seemed to show the message was getting through. Local 43 represents many of the technical workers at Detroit's Fox 2. Contract negotiations began in May but the October negotiations ended with the union walking out.

Master control operator David Minter said workers took a four percent wage cut in 2009 and have gone four years without a raise. He and others are angry that Fox is now asking for even more cuts.

Possibly taking a cue from Walmart and other anti-labor businesses, Fox wants to eliminate the breaks people take during their working day. Moore said his members regularly work seven and a half to eight hours straight in a crowded six by eight foot room.

Another key issue is jurisdictional rights. Fox wants to allow anybody working in the building to shoot and transmit video. For the "YouTube" generation, quality means nothing; they need to get



"on the air fast."

Penny wise and pound foolish might describe another Fox demand. Photographers and other NABET members often work outside in what can be very nasty weather. Incredulously, Fox no longer wants to provide foul weather gear. When workers asked why, Fox replied that it costs them "\$7,000 every three years." "This is from a company that makes \$1.8 billion," Moore observed.

The blame for the aggressive approach is not the Local Fox management. "We had an agreement in two hours but as soon as they sent it to Fox headquarters in New York, the reply came back 'no way.'"

What is happening at Fox 2 Detroit is taking place at Fox outlets all over the country. There are now 30 open contracts with NABET and other unions said Moore. "We can't close contracts because they don't want to." Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Chris Michalakakis said news quality will suffer when work is "shopped out" to interns who don't do this for a living nor have the needed experience.

He was incredulous that Fox is fighting over a \$7,000 tab for cold weather gear. "That's Roger Ailes' (president of Fox News) lunch money."

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Sen. Davis registers candidacy for governor

By Douglas Matus

State Senator Wendy Davis of Fort Worth filed her official candidacy for the Democratic nomination for Texas governor on November 9. In an effort to showcase her focus on job creation in the technology sector, Senator Davis registered at the uShip headquarters in Austin. Her primary Republican challenger, Texas State Attorney General Greg Abbott, also made official his own candidacy. Each seeks to succeed the well coiffed Rick Perry, who has chosen to forego re-election after serving the conservative agenda from the governor's mansion for the past 12 years.

As she filed her paperwork, Davis stated: "I'm running for governor because I believe all Texans should have a voice in their future and a place in Texas' future." The state senator, who made nationwide headlines after her courageous filibuster of a discriminatory anti-abortion law, also promises a focus on job creation, education, and governmental transparency.

Abbott, seems bluntly convinced that Texans will continue to rubber stamp his party's ideological extremism, posted on Twitter that, "The state of Texas is going to stay as red as the shirt I'm wearing today. We can tell Democrats to 'Come and Take It.' I am prepared to roll to victory." Abbott seeks to inherit and further Perry's bigoted agenda. Despite having a substantial monetary advantage, Abbott only leads Davis by six percentage points.

NASA estudiará atmósfera de Marte con nueva nave

Por Marcia Dunn AP

La NASA espera que su nueva nave espacial a Marte haga honor a su nombre.

La sonda exploradora robot llamada Maven será lanzada al espacio el 18 de noviembre para realizar un viaje de 10 meses al planeta rojo. Una vez concluido el viaje, volará en órbita en torno a Marte y estudiará la atmósfera marciana para comprender cómo el planeta pasó de templado y húmedo, a frío y seco.

"Un maven es un experto de confianza", dijo el director científico espacial John Grunsfeld. La Maven ayudará a los científicos a "elaborar una historia de la atmósfera de Marte y ayudará a los futuros exploradores humanos que viajen a Marte".

La misión de 671 millones de dólares es la 21ra expedición de la NASA al vecino más atractivo de la Tierra, tras el periplo de la sonda espacial Curiosity, que sigue funcionando un año después de su llegada.

Cuando la Maven llegue a Marte en septiembre, se unirá a tres sondas espaciales en funcionamiento, dos de Estados Unidos y una europea. Una nave orbital india llegará más o menos al mismo tiempo. La Maven será la décima sonda enviada a Marte por la NASA; tres fracasaron, lo que prueba lo difícil de la tarea.

"Ningún otro planeta, aparte quizá de la Tierra, acaparó la atención

del público de todo el mundo como Marte", dijo Grunsfeld.

En un principio Marte tuvo una atmósfera de espesor suficiente como para retener agua y nubes de humedad, dijo el investigador jefe Bruce Jakosky, del Laboratorio de Física Atmosférica y Espacial de la Universidad de Colorado en Boulder. Alguna vez el agua corrió en Marte, y seguramente existió fauna microbiana.

"No obstante, la atmósfera cambió de alguna forma con el tiempo al medio ambiente frío y seco que vemos hoy", dijo Jakosky. "Lo que no sabemos es cual fue la causa de ese cambio".

Maven, abreviatura en inglés Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution. de Evolución Atmosférica y Volatilidad de Marte, es la primera sonda especial dedicada enteramente a estudiar la parte superior de la atmósfera de Marte. La sonda de la India también estudiará la atmósfera pero dará un paso más al buscar metano, un posible indicador de vida.

Los científicos conjeturan que parte de la atmósfera primaria y el dióxido de carbono cayeron sobre la superficie marciana, ya que hay pruebas de minerales de carbono en Marte. Los gases podrían haber ascendido y difuminarse en el espacio, despojados por el Sol, molécula por molécula, dijo Jakosky.

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