Think it Couldn’t Happen Here?
War on public employee unions may spread to Illinois next

Teamsters nationwide are closely watching what’s happening in Wisconsin, Indiana, and other states as lawmakers, fresh off election victories in November, chip away at union rights that took decades to achieve.

"Open your eyes, people," said Tony Barr, president of Local 916. "We are already seeing signs in Illinois that the mood is souring on labor unions."

The “signs” include new legislation that says no Illinois constitutional officer can enter into labor agreements that extend beyond their term. The law severely hampers contract negotiations and essentially makes planning or job security impossible for the hundreds of Teamsters working for the Secretary of State, Comptroller, Treasurer, Attorney General, and IDOT.

“It’s ridiculous,” said Barr. “Those offices will now spend most of their first year in office at the bargaining table hammering out agreements.”

Other signs include an attempt to limit the categories of public employees allowed to organize, a move supported by Governor Pat Quinn. Almost 3,000 members of Local 916 are currently employed by the State of Illinois. More troubling are the proposals being floated that would put retiree health insurance as well as pension benefits up for grabs, despite constitutional protection for the latter. With House Speaker Michael Madigan willing to talk about change, Barr said nothing is out of the realm of possibility.

“This is the first time in my memory that lawmakers have seriously threatened to renge on benefits accrued by current employees,” said Tony Barr. “It used to be that promises made were promises kept.”

Rallies to support beleaguered Wisconsin employees and warn Illinois lawmakers were held in February and early April. Hundreds of union workers showed up but thousands have been rallying in other states.

“There doesn’t seem to be any sense of urgency here,” said Barr. “People need to know that apathy has consequences.”
From the President

Lest We Forget

November 13, 1909 — 259 Illinois miners die in The Great Cherry Coal Mine Disaster.

One of the darkest days in the history of labor. But just one. There were years when catastrophes caused by abysmal working conditions and employer greed were appallingly common in every industry in this country. It’s been a long, bloody journey for organized labor in America but the tragedies and sacrifices of those who fought to protect and improve the lives of the working class paid off.


The 8-hour workday. The minimum wage. Health and retirement benefits. The right to organize. The right to strike. I could go on and on.

The sweatshops are gone but labor unions continue to speak on behalf of America’s working families. Every time we reach an agreement with an employer that provides you with a wage increase or protects your benefits, it’s your union membership at work. Every time we have your back at a grievance hearing, it’s your union membership at work.

The fact that public employees in this state covered by collective bargaining agreements have received raises the past four years while non-union employees have gone without? Thank your unions.

Now, we are seeing a radical assault on employee protections, which just a few years ago would have seemed unimaginable in its scope. At the same time, unions are being vilified as greedy and our history is being distorted. In Maine, Governor Paul LePage has labeled a mural depicting the state’s labor history as anti-business and ordered it removed from the lobby of the Maine Labor Department!

Those of you in the private sector, this isn’t just about public employees. Your rights are at stake, too. What happens in the next couple of years will either weaken or strengthen your voice in the workplace. We need to fight this at the legislative level so we don’t have to fight it in the courts.

You need to step up and join our political action committee — D.R.I.V.E. Give us the ability to preserve the rights our union brothers and sisters fought so hard to win. Let’s not wait until things escalate to the level of Wisconsin, Indiana, or Ohio.

Until next time,

— Tony Barr, Local 916 President
About D.R.I.V.E.
Democrats, Republicans, Independent Voter Education

Through grassroots political action and aggressive lobbying on Capitol Hill and in State Houses and City Halls across America, Teamsters have stopped some of the worst attacks on working people.

You can take a stand for working families by contributing to D.R.I.V.E. — the Teamsters’ political action committee. Your contribution will support grassroots action by Teamster families.

• Keep members and their families informed on the key issues that affect our future, including voter guides that show the records of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

• Fund rallies, news conferences, advertisements, and phone banks to build support on issues of concern to working people.

• Support voter registration, and financial support for political candidates who will stand up for working families.

Pro Tech D.R.I.V.E.
Registration Rises

The headlines from Wisconsin, Indiana, and Ohio are fueling a rise in Local 916’s participation rate in D.R.I.V.E.

Nearly 100 members, mostly from the ranks of the IDOT Professional Technical employees, have turned in cards to participate in D.R.I.V.E. since the beginning of the year. That equates to a 50 percent jump in registration among Pro Techs.

“There is so much at stake right now, I can’t stress enough the need to get involved,” said Tony Barr, Local 916 president. “Lawmakers only sit up and pay attention when you prove you have the ability to support candidates that support your positions. And that takes money.”
Hoffa: “Our Fight Has Just Begun”

*IBT General President statement on the War on Workers*

“March 9, 2011 will go down in history as a tragic day for democracy and for the American Worker.

Wisconsin governor Scott Walker couldn’t win an honest debate through the legislative process or in the court of public opinion. He lied to carry out the extremist agenda of the CEO billionaires he carries water for and the Senate Republican leadership used illegal and undemocratic methods to do it. From now on, ‘Wisconsin Republican’ will be a term synonymous with ‘political criminal.’

They may have won this battle using unethical means, but we will win the war. There are far more teachers, nurses, firefighters, police officers, and truck drivers in Wisconsin than there are CEOs and billionaires. When recall day comes, Scott Walker and the rest of these traitors to the middle class will be thrown out of office.

Walker lit a fire in Madison that has spread across the country, not just with union members but with everyone who depends on someone else to sign their paycheck. Our fight has just begun.”
The Status of Illinois Public Pensions

Brief Background:

- The state’s pension obligations cost more than $12.5 billion each year.

- According to a recent Moody’s Report, Illinois’ public pensions are the most chronically underfunded in the nation.

- The state was not able to cover the 2011 payment to the pension fund out of current revenues. The General Assembly passed legislation to borrow money to cover most of this payment, which will be paid off over the next eight years.

Solutions?

The existing pension debt could be addressed by any combination of:

- raising new tax revenue
- cutting spending on other programs
- reneging on the promise to pay existing benefits.

Proposals for Change Being Floated:

Beginning in January of 2011, the state altered the pension program for new employees by reducing the level of pension benefits.

Legislation has been introduced, but not adopted, to reduce the level of future pension benefits accumulated by current employees.

- The state could alter the program for new and/or existing employees by keeping the basic structure in place but reducing the level of pension benefits.

- Increased employee contributions. This means that current employees could accept mandatory increases in their contributions, or retired employees could add to the fund through a tax on pension income (in Illinois, pension income is currently tax exempt).

- The state could eliminate the defined benefit program and only offer a defined contribution program. This does not necessarily influence the cost or generosity of the program, but it forces the government to pay pension benefits upfront.

What about the legal side of the pension issue?

It’s impossible to predict the outcome of any legal challenge but the Illinois Supreme Court has in earlier cases indicated that the Pension Clause should apply to protect the acquired benefits of current employees. No judicial opinions have resolved the question whether the legislature could modify pension benefits.

Is every category of state employee affected?

Most public sector employees participate in a state pension program and could be affected by changes. State resources are scarce and policymakers have to trade off funding for pensions with many other programs. Changes to the pension program, therefore, affect the entire state budget and the ability to fund other programs.

Will anything happen this year?

The magnitude of the problem makes it nearly certain that the legislature will have to take action this year (beyond borrowing) to address the future solvency of the pension funds. However, it is uncertain which course of action the state leaders will choose to take.
We need your updated home address!

Please call Sue Fickas at (217) 522-7932 or toll free (877) 349-4916 or email sues@teamsters916.org to let us know if you’ve moved. We want you to stay informed of all Local 916 news that impacts your livelihood. It only takes a minute!

State Employee Member Alert – Health insurance choices still undecided

The annual benefit choice period for state employees has always been marked by an avalanche of TV ads, direct mail, and other promotions from insurance providers hoping to persuade someone to change their health plan.

This year, however, the choices available to employees are still undecided. The State's recent decision to boot HMO providers Health Alliance, Humana, and PersonalCare, in favor of Blue Cross Blue Shield, is being challenged.

The state's website (www.benefitschoice.il.gov) says:

At this time, a final decision regarding the managed care contracts for FY 2012 has not been made. As a result, vendor names, coverage areas and rates are not available. Once the managed care plans are identified, members will be advised of the extended Benefit Choice end date by which they must make a decision.

A reminder: for our members, this issue is about choice, not possible premium hikes. We negotiate those costs on your behalf.

Pro Techs Agenda Features Experts
Annual seminar draws crowd of specialists

More than 500 IDOT Pro Techs from around the state gathered in Springfield once again, to hear about the latest in their highly specialized industry.

“This is a tremendous opportunity each year to share information and learn from each other,” said Tony Barr, Local 916 president. “We also had a great line-up of experts.”

This year, the topics ranged from the status of IDOT’s budget, IDOT projects underway, and DUI laws. In addition, representatives from the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) and the Office of Healthcare & Family Services spoke on pension and health cover-
Freight Agreement Saves 70 Local Jobs
Teamsters ok to restructuring keeps YRCW from going under

Local 916 members at Holland and the other freight companies covered by the National Master Freight Contract are breathing a little easier. After months of negotiations with YRC Worldwide, Inc., a company teetering on the brink, the union has agreed to stand with the company as it restructures to save 25,000 jobs nationwide.

“It’s an agreement in principle (AIP) at this point, which means we are still reviewing to make sure it will achieve what it’s supposed to, in terms of operational and job security,” said David Rush, Local 916 vice president. “We anticipate a final agreement, then restructuring to take place over the summer.”

The agreement gives the Teamsters two seats on the YRCW board of directors and provides meaningful equity ownership for employees. There were concessions made by the union in order to reduce the company’s debt and allow for a capital infusion by investors. The result is expected to be long term stability for YRCW, preserving good union jobs and benefits.

“Given the scale of what’s happening in the economy and in the freight industry, this cooperative effort was necessary,” said Rush. “Everyone had to give so we could save jobs and protect pensions. Nobody wins if the employer goes under.”

**KEY CONDITIONS AND PROVISIONS**

**GOVERNANCE**
- The Teamsters Union will be assured two independent director representatives on the company Board of Directors.

**FINANCIAL**
- Meaningful equity ownership stake for the Teamsters employed by YRC in the restructured company. This ownership stake will allow Teamsters employed by YRC to receive substantial economic benefit from the company’s performance over time.

**PENSION**
- The company will follow through on its promise to re-initiate pension contributions at the previously negotiated 25 percent of contribution rate on June 1, 2011.
Ava and Bella Clatfelter, granddaughters of Executive Board member Tom Clatfelter, tell Santa their Christmas wishes.
Mourn for the Dead, Fight for the Living
Workers’ Memorial Day celebrated on April 28

The Teamsters Union recognizes April 28 as Workers’ Memorial Day — a day to honor the working men and women killed and injured on the job and to fight for worker safety, reducing the number of future accidents.

“The toll of workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths remains enormous,” said James P. Hoffa, General President of IBT. “Highway incidents continue to be the leading cause of on-the-job fatalities, and ergonomic hazards cripple and injure hundreds of thousands of workers every year.”

“Hispanic and immigrant workers, who often work in the most dangerous jobs and are exploited by employers, have no union protections and are afraid to speak out. On this Workers’ Memorial Day, we need to join hands to seek stronger safety and health protections and better standards and enforcement. Mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living.”

Local 916 General Membership Meetings
All meetings are held at 6 p.m. at The Hall

No Membership Meetings in June, July, and August

Send Us Your Comments!

Want more information on an article? Or do you want to see an issue addressed in the next newsletter? Please send us your comments and suggestions, as well as your email address, by the first of the month to:

Sue Fickas
The Hall Report
3361 Teamster Way, Springfield, IL 62707

or e-mail the editor at sues@teamsters916.org
Local 916 Grievance Gets A Boost

Recent settlements with 16 fired workers may help others battling IDOT

The settlement of a lawsuit brought against IDOT supervisors by 16 fired workers may set the stage for a positive outcome in a similar proceeding involving the rest of the bargaining unit.

The 16 were fired more than seven years ago for what they claimed were political reasons. They sued and won in February, and on March 7, settled for damages out of court. The workers will share $442,000, plus pension benefits and, for the nine plaintiffs who will be rehired, salary increases.

“We needed that information,” said Tony Barr, Local 916 president. “Ours is an almost identical dispute. In fact, we had an arbitrator selected and were ready to go on our grievance when it was put on hold pending the outcome of the federal case.”

The union grievance, encompassing the rest of the bargaining unit, is now moving forward. Michael O’Hara, the private attorney representing Local 916 in the case, said a new arbitrator will be selected shortly. And now they have a precedent in the matter paving the way.

“The good news is, the good people in that case prevailed,” said O’Hara.

E-board Sworn In

One of Local 916’s own members, Rick Sturm, a yard crew member in the Illinois Secretary of State’s Office, did the honors as the Executive Board was sworn in at The Hall.

Elected last September on a “white ballot” (no opposition), the board began its fifth consecutive term in office in January and will serve through December 2013.

The Local 916 Executive Board, left to right: Tom Clatfelter, Leo Carroll, David Rush, Tony Barr, Lenny Reynolds, Dave Shafer. Not pictured: Jim Franklin.
## Mark Your Calenders!

### Upcoming Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>August 11</strong></td>
<td>NOTICE: LOCAL 916 WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE 2011 STATE FAIR PARADE</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>August 20</strong></td>
<td>Membership Appreciation Day Luncheon</td>
<td>L.U. Hall, Springfield</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 17</strong></td>
<td>Steward Dinner Dance</td>
<td>Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 9</strong></td>
<td>Quincy Holiday Party</td>
<td>Stoney Creek Inn, Quincy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>December 17</strong></td>
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### HOLIDAY PARTIES

- **November 9**
  - Quincy Holiday Party
  - 6 – 8 pm
  - Stoney Creek Inn, Quincy
- **December 17**
  - Local 916 Holiday Party
  - 6 – 8 pm
  - Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield

### Local Cub Scouts Enliven The Hall

On March 18, the best of the best in pinewood racing gathered at The Hall to determine who would be the king of the hill. Or, in this case, the slope.

Approximately 30 Cub Scouts, ages 7–11, squared off in the Lincoln Home District Cub Scout Pinewood Derby. Only one emerged as the winner but everyone had fun.

“We see sharing our space like this as part of our commitment to our community,” said Tony Barr, Local 916 president. “The community is very good to us and we want to give back, especially when we can help out organizations that serve children.”

### Congratulations to Rick Culberson!

**IDOT Pro Tech marks employment milestone**

Rick Culberson, a Pro Tech with IDOT Division 6, was recently honored for his 30 years of service during the agency’s annual employee recognition ceremony.
Be Sure to Get a Withdrawal Card

It is important to take a withdrawal card from the Local if you do not work any days in a given month. This applies if you terminate your employment, go on sick leave, workers’ compensation, leave of absence, are laid off, or any other reason that keeps you from your job.

Your request should be made the end of the month in which you last worked. A withdrawal card allows a member to maintain their membership on an inactive basis. In other words, you will not owe union dues until you return to work. A withdrawal card is in effect indefinitely, or until you return to work. If you retire, request a Retiree withdrawal card.

If you allow your dues to go delinquent 90 days you will be placed on suspension status. When you request your withdrawal card, make sure you receive it in the mail within one week’s time. If you do not receive the card, call The Hall at (217) 522-7932 or (toll free) 1-877-349-4916.

Nestle Co-workers “Packet” in After 21 Years
Friends Carolyn Ruyle and Regina Bartelheim have no plans to lose touch

They were friends and neighbors who connected each week over little packets of Coffee-mate non-dairy creamer powder. But they weren’t sharing a morning coffee in their sunny kitchens. They were working the overnight shift at Nestle’s Jacksonville plant.

“We started as temps, first me and then Regina,” said Carolyn. “We worked the machine that formed the packets, filled the packets, and sealed the packets of Coffee-mate.”

They spent years working overnights, then went to 12-hour days, shuffling their days off each week. When Carolyn announced last year that she was finally retiring, Regina decided to set a date, too. They chose the end of 2010, but made sure they were gone before the Christmas holiday – Regina on December 16 and Carolyn on December 22.

Still no morning coffee together, though. Both women are still working – but this time, at encore careers that are close to their hearts.

“I’m a nail technician these days,” said Regina. “I got my license while I was still at Nestle, anticipating that I could do this after I retired. I work between 15 and 30 hours a week.”

Regina said she also cleans a limited number of houses for extra income. Add to that schedule son Jason’s growing family of four children, and she is close to being as busy as always.

“I also have brothers in Jacksonville and two younger sisters in Belleville and in Indiana,” said Regina. “Spending time with family is a big benefit to retiring.”

Carolyn agrees and has already logged significant time not only spending time with family, but taking care of a couple of them.

“I keep my 20-month old great-granddaughter, Dylann, three to four days a week so her mother, my granddaughter Alyssa, can attend pharmacy tech school at M.T.I. in Springfield,” said Carolyn. “I also help my mother, who is still independent and lives in Jacksonville. She’ll be 89 this May.”

Not that these two active women spend every minute in service to others. Carolyn and husband Ron have already traveled to Vegas, taking 16-year-old granddaughter Sarah Brown with them.
They plan to travel more, including trips to Arizona, where daughter Dena Elsarelli and her family live. The Ruyles also have two other daughters – Jami Osborne of Jacksonville and Rona West of Murrayville – as well as seven grandchildren and great-grandbaby Dylann.

Regina also plans to travel, starting with a road trip to southern California in the fall. “I have friends who have relocated to California, Arizona, and Texas,” said Regina. “I’m looking forward to traveling to see them and see the country.”

And, at some point, the two might actually get together for coffee. “Being my neighbor, she runs over,” said Carolyn, of Regina. “She also has a granddaughter that is a little younger than Dylann. We’ll see each other.”

IDOT Pro Tech Hits the Ground Running

Catherine Mikolay balances job with healthy “addiction”

She’s up most mornings between 4 and 5 a.m. to hit the streets of tiny Maeyston, IL, a picturesque German pastoral village nestled in the hills bordering the Mississippi River in Monroe County.

Catherine Mikolay logs several miles at a brisk pace before she returns home to get ready for her new job with Division 8, where she is in contract support for the project implementation bureau.

“I’m no elite runner by any means, just a normal person with a crazy addiction to this form of exercise,” said Mikolay. But it energizes me for the day. By the time I’m done, I really feel like a superhero – bulletproof and stress-free.”

Mikolay runs marathons several times a year, including the Chicago Marathon and the Great River Road Run in Alton. She recently placed 8th in her division and 202nd overall out of more than 700 runners in the Soulard Mardi Gras 5K run. She trains with a group of like-minded women her same age who run up to 16 miles a day. It’s a passion now, but it didn’t start that way.

“I injured myself in my very first half-marathon,” said Mikolay, with a laugh. “I remember thinking, ‘I can’t believe I actually paid to do this!’”

Since then, she’s been injury-free and chooses marathon events that raise money for charity. For the Chicago Marathon, she raised more than $1,000 for a charity that promotes healthy lifestyles through athleticism for pre-teen girls.

When she’s not running, she spends time with her husband, visits her two grown daughters, and hits the books. Mikolay is earning a bachelor’s degree from the University of Illinois Springfield. She is also enjoying her new job and is grateful to be part of IDOT and Local 916.

“I come from a long line of union workers,” said Mikolay. “I’ve always believed in the value of unions.”
Got an interesting story to tell?

We’d love to feature you in an issue of The Hall Report. Let us know what’s happening to you, your spouse, or your kids. Special hobby? Award? Honor? You can also tell us about a co-worker who may be too shy to come forward him or herself. And if you’re retiring, let us know!

Call Sue at (217) 522-7932. Then expect a call from our newsletter editor.

Adams County Says Goodbye to Two
Friends Bob Houghton and Bob Jackson ready to leave the plowing to others

To these men, winter has always meant bundling up and clearing the snow so Adams County drivers could get around. So, retiring in the middle of the winter just didn’t make sense. But now that the trees have budded, heavy equipment operators Bob Houghton and Bob Jackson are calling it quits. Farming and fishing beckon, and the two friends are ready to answer the call.

“I’ve gone bass fishing my whole life,” said Houghton, who left at the end of April with 32 years of service. “I’ve always fished with my son, John, and this summer, my fishing partners will include my three grandsons.”

He plans to occasionally help out if his son needs assistance with his Quincy-based painting and remodeling business. Mostly, though, he plans to fish. Like every other spring, summer, and fall, Houghton will haul his boat to the lakes of Missouri as often as he can and for as long as he can.

“I’m not the adventurous type,” said Houghton. “I’ll travel 100 miles for a fishing trip, but that’s about it. That’s my idea of retirement.”

Jackson also plans to devote more time to something he’s done all his life, but instead of fishing, it’s farming, helping son-in-law Brandon Gerard tend his land near Pittsfield. He’ll also be expanding his 19-year-old business – A-1 Firewood. However, neither activity will feel so much like work now, since he won’t have to squeeze them in around his full-time job.

“I’ve seen too many people just sit down in retirement,” said Jackson. “I have no intention of doing that, but working three jobs at a time? No more.”
Jackson does plan on traveling. Wife Vickie is not ready to retire from her job at John Wood Community College just yet, but the two will take the time to vacation, and Jackson is thinking big. “I’d like to see Hawaii,” he said, with a laugh.

Besides his wife, Jackson has a daughter, Miranda, 33, two granddaughters, Molly, 2, and Lily, 11 months, and two stepchildren, Brennan, 21, and Ashley, 23.

Houghton has a son, John, and daughter, Stephanie Dunker. Stephanie and her husband, Pat, live in Ursa, north of Quincy, with their five children, ages 8-17.

Now that they’re retired, the friends plan to stay in touch. Houghton was best man at Jackson’s wedding to Vickie. One thing the two men won’t be doing anymore, together or apart, is plowing snow.

“I will be looking out the window, watching it come down next winter,” said Jackson. “And, I’ll be wondering, ‘Where are all those county boys?’”
TEAMSTERS LOCAL 916 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MAY 2011
Thurs., May 19th – Membership Meeting – 6 pm – The Hall

JUNE 2011
No Membership Meeting

JULY 2011
No Membership Meeting

AUGUST 2011
No Membership Meeting
Sat., Aug. 20th – Membership Appreciation Luncheon – Noon-2 pm – The Hall

SEPTMBER 2011
Thurs., Sept. 15th – Membership Meetings Resume – 6 pm – The Hall
Sat., Sept. 7th – Steward Dinner Dance – 6 pm – Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield

Dean Williams
Dean Williams Photography
NEW YORK - CHICAGO - HOLLYWOOD
IATSE Local 600
1204 Harmony Court
Springfield, Illinois
62703-5368
217 - 529 - 1555
website: www.deanwilliams.net