

I. INTERNAL POLITICS
OF ORGANIZED INTERESTS

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Organized Labor

Adaptive Strategies in Challenging Times

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In the early months of 2011, political protests rocked the Wisconsin Capitol grounds in Madison.¹ The state's newly elected Republican governor, Scott Walker, began his term in controversial fashion with a proposal—dubbed by its supporters as the “Wisconsin budget repair bill”—to eliminate nearly all collective bargaining rights for state public employees, excluding police, firefighters, and state troopers. The legislation also made it more difficult for public sector unions to collect dues from their members and required workers to vote their union back into existence every year. Among those most affected by the legislation were the state's public school teachers, who faced not only significant increases to their health care premiums under Walker's budget but also the loss of power for their union, the Wisconsin Education Association Council. When the bill moved forward in the Wisconsin State Assembly on February 14, Madison soon became what a *USA Today* headline called “Ground Zero” in the battle over labor unions.²

In the immediate weeks following the bill's introduction in the state legislature, huge crowds, some reaching as many as 100,000 protestors, filled the halls of the State Capitol with angry chants of “Kill the Bill” and taunts to the governor to “Come out, come out, wherever you are.”³ Protestors physically occupied the Capitol building and filled the streets with homemade signs. Yet, even as the protests grew and began drawing national attention, the Republican-controlled state legislature moved forward with the budget bill, which Walker signed into law on March 11.

The bill's passage became what some political observers called labor's new “PATCO moment,” comparing events in Wisconsin to the infamous Air Traffic Controllers strike in 1981, when President Ronald Reagan dismissed 11,000 air traffic controllers who belonged to the union, the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO).⁴ A year later, organized labor led an ill-fated attempt to recall Walker from office—an effort that saw Walker defeat his Democratic challenger, Tom Barrett, 53 percent to 46 percent. The consecutive losses for the labor movement sent off a wave of obituary-style commentaries about the death of organized labor and its influence as a social and political force in the United States. In the satirical words of late-night comic Stephen Colbert,

“The biggest event in the universe happened last night in Wisconsin. . . . Well, the results are in and Walker crushed [Barrett] by seven points. Suck it people who educate our children. . . . We did it! It’s the end of unions!”⁵

Colbert’s joking aside, serious political discussions, including an editorial in the *Washington Post*, asked whether the events in Wisconsin represented the “end of unions.”⁶ With just 11.3 percent of wage and salary workers claiming membership in a union in 2013—a dramatic fall from the mid-1950s when unions represented roughly one of every three U.S. workers—Walker’s triumph in Wisconsin seemed to many observers to be a microcosm of labor’s weakened position and loss of power. Even some pro-union commentators have begun to ponder questions like, “If labor dies, what’s next?”⁷

While events in Wisconsin and the prolonged national decline in union membership exemplify the difficult times and challenges confronting organized labor, there have been some successes and even cause for guarded optimism about labor’s future. Notably, organized labor has greatly expanded its outreach beyond just its union members through worker centers and “alt-labor” groups in an effort to organize workers in new and untraditional ways. Affiliate organizations, such as the AFL-CIO’s Working America organization, have also targeted nonunion workers and have been a potent force in mobilizing working-class voters in elections. Likewise, unions have made minority outreach a central part of a larger strategy to expand their base. Even some traditional activities, such as television advertising campaigns, have been carefully targeted to appeal to a broad audience of middle-class voters in an effort to counter the small-government, libertarian policy agenda of David and Charles Koch’s organization Americans for Prosperity—perhaps the most influential organization in today’s conservative movement. This chapter considers these developments and labor’s recent strategic adaptations to the challenges it faces in an increasingly hostile antiunion environment.

Background: Organized Labor’s Changing Fortunes

In 1935, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA), more popularly known as the Wagner Act (named for its sponsor, Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York), became law. Organized labor’s so-called Magna Carta made it illegal for an employer to discriminate against or fire a worker who attempted to form or join a union. The law also created the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to oversee union certification elections and to enforce federal labor standards and practices. In the ensuing decade after passage of the NLRA, union membership increased from 3.6 million workers to more than 12 million.⁸ By the mid-1950s, union membership topped more than 16 million workers, with the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (1.5 million members), the United Auto Workers (1.1 million members), and the United Steelworkers of America (945,000 members) leading the labor movement.⁹

In 1955, organized labor's two dominant federations, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), merged to become the AFL-CIO. Following the merger, roughly nine out of every ten union members belonged to a union under the umbrella of the AFL-CIO.¹⁰ Coinciding with the growth of organized labor, then-U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower, a Republican, stated, "Unions have a secure place in our industrial life."¹¹

With its rising numbers, organized labor became increasingly influential in American politics. President Franklin Roosevelt's support for the NLRA and other pro-union measures helped build an "enduring" alliance between the Democratic Party and unions.¹² Indeed, by the 1950s and 1960s, organized labor had evolved into what one scholar referred to as an "ancillary" component of the Democratic Party.¹³ As another account summarized, organized labor and the Democratic Party "operated within a political coalition as partners."¹⁴

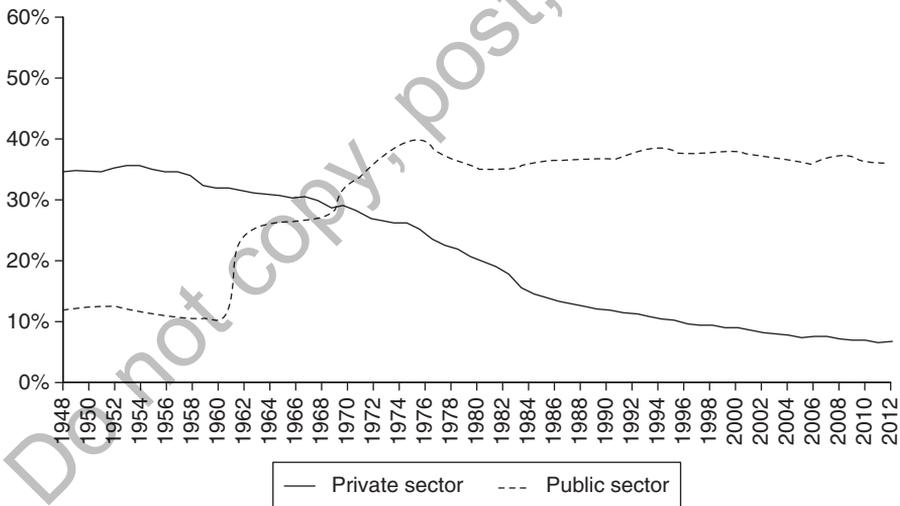
Yet challenges to the power and "secure place" for unions would emerge in the decades to follow. The proportion of workers who belonged to a union began a steady and precipitous fall, dropping from one-third of the nonagricultural U.S. workforce in the 1950s to one-fourth by the 1970s. In the face of these declines, the president of the AFL-CIO from 1955 to 1979, George Meany, reacted with relative indifference. In an interview, he stated to a reporter in 1972, "I don't care. . . . Why should we worry about organizing groups of people who do not appear to want to be organized?"¹⁵

Beyond the lack of direction from labor's top leaders to its organizing challenges, federal law changed significantly roughly a decade before the decline in union density with passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947. Under the provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, states were given the power to pass so-called "right-to-work" laws that created "open shop" provisions, which allow workers to refuse membership in a union or to pay union dues as a condition of employment. The effect of the law fundamentally altered the incentive structure of joining a union for individual workers in states that passed right-to-work legislation. A worker who refused to join a union was still covered by the terms of any collective bargaining agreement negotiated between a union and employer. This created the ideal conditions for what scholars refer to as a "free rider" problem: workers who refused to join the union were entitled to the benefits that other dues-paying union members won, but at no individual cost to themselves. In such an environment, free riders proliferate for reasons of self-interest, resulting in the eventual demise of the union. Almost immediately after passage of the Taft-Hartley Act, twelve states passed right-to-work laws.¹⁶ By 1960, six more states did so as well, creating a major hurdle for unions to overcome in much of the nation in the decades that followed.¹⁷ (As of 2014, a total of twenty-four states had enacted right-to-work laws.)

In addition to the weakening of the NLRA, organized labor faced major changes to the economy, which included advances in technology and automation,

as well as the “offshoring” of production to countries with low-wage workforces. These forces contributed to losses in U.S. industrial and manufacturing jobs—a sector where unions had experienced considerable success in organizing workers during its membership peak. Other accounts also point out that, by the late 1970s, employers began to resist the “social contract” or “social compact” that dictated increased profits and productivity should be a shared benefit for both management and its workforce—a norm that some scholars contend had governed industrial relations from the end of World War II.¹⁸ With this shift and break in the social contract, employer resistance to unions intensified, and private sector unionization rates fell from a high of 36 percent in 1953 to just 12 percent by the end of the 1980s. By 2013, the percentage of unionized private sector workers had dropped below 7 percent (see Figure 1). As unions struggled to organize workers in the private sector, particularly in the industrial and manufacturing sectors, once-powerful unions such as the United Auto Workers (UAW) and the United Steelworkers of America saw their numbers and influence diminish.

Figure 1 Union Membership as a Proportion of the Private and Public Sector Labor Force



Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics from 1948 to 1972; Hirsch and Macpherson (2014) from 1973 to 2013.

Public sector unions, however, underwent a very different experience in the second half of the twentieth century. Union membership as a percentage of the public sector workforce increased from rates of roughly 10 percent in the 1950s to a peak of 40 percent in 1976, with levels stabilizing and settling at 35

percent in 2013 (see Figure 1). Public sector unions benefitted from President John Kennedy's Executive Order 10988 in 1961, which allowed public employees the right to bargain collectively on nonwage issues in the federal sector. Public sector unions were also largely immune to the many factors responsible for the decline of private sector unions, such as the rise of global economic competition and increased employer resistance. As a consequence, unions such as the National Education Association (NEA), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) emerged as leading voices in the labor movement.

Yet, even with the rise of public sector unions, the total number of union members dropped from a peak of 21 million members in 1979 to 14.5 million members in 2013.¹⁹ These declines have complicated labor's "partnership" with the Democratic Party.²⁰ The relative fall of labor created an opportunity for business, which gave generously through corporate political action committees to Democrats during the 1980s.²¹ The relationship between business and the Democratic Party became so close that consumer-rights activist and former presidential candidate Ralph Nader famously remarked that "the two parties have morphed together into one *corporate party* with two heads wearing different make-up."²²

Perhaps the ultimate illustration of labor's weakened position came when President Ronald Reagan crushed the aforementioned Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization. Air traffic controllers and their union, PATCO, sought higher wages, improved benefits, a shorter workweek, and better equipment. After negotiations stalled with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) over a new contract, PATCO members went on strike in August of 1981, despite President Reagan's warning that doing so would constitute an illegal act and would result in their termination. In his words, "I must tell those who fail to report for duty this morning, they are in violation of the law, and if they do not report for work within 48 hours, they have forfeited their jobs and will be terminated."²³ Two days after the warning and without any break in the strike, Reagan replaced the striking workers and permanently barred them from ever working again as air traffic controllers (a prohibition that lasted until 1993 when President Clinton signed an executive order ending the ban). On October 22, 1981, the Federal Labor Relations Authority ruled that PATCO had violated the "no-strike" rule and could no longer represent its members.²⁴ After the decision, Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis announced, "They [PATCO] have been decertified. As far as our determination, there is no PATCO."²⁵ Although the remaining air traffic controllers would later organize into the National Air Traffic Controllers Association (NATCA), Reagan's firm actions against PATCO and the union's inability to win even modest concessions for its members signaled the difficult times that lay ahead for organized labor.

A decade later in 1994, the Republican Party won majorities in both chambers of Congress for the first time in forty years. The incoming Speaker, Newt Gingrich, spoke against union protections in the Wagner Act, and Dick Armey, the new House majority leader, opposed even basic labor law protections, such as the minimum wage. From 1995 to 1998, with Gingrich as Speaker, Republicans pushed an array of antiunion measures, such as so-called paycheck protection legislation, which attempted to require unions to receive preapproval from their members to have their dues used for political purposes. While paycheck protection legislation never became federal law, organized labor was on the defensive for much of the mid to late 1990s.²⁶

The heirs to the antiunion legacy of Reagan and Gingrich have come most recently from state houses where conservative Republican governors have taken the fight to organized labor. Governor Scott Walker's repeal of collective bargaining rights for state employees in Wisconsin, as noted at the outset of this chapter, strikes at the heart of labor's strength in the public sector. Although less aggressive in its scope than Walker's efforts, Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey has pushed to curb collective bargaining rights for state employees to negotiate for health benefits. In Indiana, a state with a significant industrial history, then-governor Mitch Daniels endorsed right-to-work legislation, which became law in the state in 2012. Perhaps most stinging of all to union advocates, the state of Michigan, once the epicenter of the labor movement, became the twenty-fourth and most recent state to adopt right-to-work legislation with the support of its Republican governor, Rick Snyder.

These latest developments underscore the difficult environment that organized labor confronts. Yet, while these setbacks have been undeniably significant and costly for the labor movement, unions have fought back using a variety of adaptive strategies and tactics that have produced successes. Indeed, in several cities and states, the labor movement is not only surviving but is even growing. In New York City, for example, union membership is on the rise.²⁷ The most significant change, however, involves a major shift in thinking about the labor movement itself from a conceptualization that once constrained itself to unions and their members only to one that now takes a much broader perspective that includes nonunion workers as well. To understand how this rethinking occurred, an examination of labor's recent past adds some necessary context.

Labor Strategies: Lessons From the Past

In 1906, Samuel Gompers, the first president of the AFL, proclaimed that organized labor "reward friends and punish enemies." In general, this rather straightforward political strategy has traditionally meant rewarding Democrats, who receive on average about 90 percent of all labor contributions and expenditures, and punishing Republicans.²⁸ Analysis of union PAC contributions and expenditures reveals that organized labor follows partisan, election-oriented

strategies in which the goal is to maximize the number of pro-union candidates, typically Democrats, elected to public office by targeting resources in competitive elections.²⁹ Still, there is considerably more to labor strategy than just raw partisanship and electoral considerations. With unions facing so many challenges that threaten their relevance and even survival, there has been a good deal of introspection within the house of labor in recent years.

Organizing or Politics?

One of the most notable debates over labor strategy and the future of the movement occurred in 2005 when the SEIU led a revolt against the AFL-CIO. Citing the continued declines in union membership as a percentage of the workforce, SEIU leaders advanced a platform of devoting more resources to member organizing drives and less to political campaigns. With the support of textile, garment, hotel, and restaurant workers in UNITE-HERE; construction workers in the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA); the United Brotherhood of Carpenters; the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); the Teamsters; and the United Farm Workers (UFW); the SEIU formed the Change to Win (CtW) federation and disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO to enact this strategy.

The CtW federation saw opportunity in the 44 million nonunion workers whose jobs could not be offshored (e.g., truckers, nurses, janitors, hotel employees, and construction workers) and, at its founding convention, pledged to invest heavily in organizing efforts to unionize these workers. To accomplish this, the CtW federation established a strategic organizing center with the goal of organizing whole sectors of the labor force. Wal-Mart, the largest employer in the United States, became a major target of the CtW federation.

Yet the ambitious goal to organize Wal-Mart workers ran into the same structural barriers to organizing that contributed to labor's declining membership in the past. In the end, efforts to organize Wal-Mart employees never materialized. The CtW federation also failed to lead any other major organizing victories on a scale to reverse the continued declines in union density. By 2009, the United Brotherhood of Carpenters disaffiliated from the CtW federation, and UNITE-HERE rejoined the AFL-CIO (although a third of the members in UNITE-HERE left to join the SEIU). A year later in 2010, LIUNA rejoined the AFL-CIO, as did the UFCW in 2013, leaving only the SEIU, the Teamsters, and the UFW in the CtW federation.

The emphasis on a political strategy, however, has not been without its own limits. Following a landslide victory for Democrats in the 2008 election, in which unions spent a combined \$450 million, the labor movement hoped for their newly elected allies in Congress and the White House to pass labor law reform to ease organizing barriers.³⁰ Even with a Democratic majority in the U.S. House, an unprecedented filibuster-proof U.S. Senate (following the

swearing in of Al Franken of Minnesota in July of 2009), and a Democrat, Barack Obama, in the White House, labor's cherished legislation to reform organizing laws, the Employee Free Choice Act, never passed Congress.

As the first decade of the twenty-first century came to a close, it was clear that traditional organizing and political solutions would not suffice for organized labor. The labor movement needed a fresh perspective and a new approach. Turning to nontraditional tactics, organized labor has made concerted efforts to adapt and survive in today's challenging environment.

New Strategies for Organizing and Politics

With manufacturing and industrial workers no longer dominating the U.S. workforce, organized labor's future rests largely with workers in the service sector. Given the difficulties in organizing these workers on a mass scale, the labor movement has begun a broader campaign to defend workers' rights outside of the traditional collective bargaining model. This alternative, known as alt-labor, is the latest effort by organized labor to reshape its future.

New Organizing Strategies: Alt-Labor

Alt-labor relies on organizations commonly referred to as worker centers. Worker centers are typically organized as nonprofit 501(c)(3) groups with the mission of supporting and defending workers' rights. Unlike a labor union, worker centers cannot organize workers for the purpose of collective bargaining with employers over wages and benefits. (Doing so would force them to forfeit their tax-exempt status. Unions, by comparison, do not have tax-exempt status.) Worker centers do not collect mandatory membership dues as a traditional labor union does but rely instead on outside funding, mostly from foundations. Instead of organizing "in the system," worker centers organize workers "outside the system" to engage in pressure tactics and protest to advance workers' interests.

Worker centers are not new. They have existed for more than two decades, although with considerable proliferation over this time. Worker centers have grown in number from five to 214 and are active in multiple states.³¹ They primarily serve workers in the retail, restaurant, and agricultural industries. Some examples include Our Wal-Mart, the Restaurant Opportunities Center, Fast Food Forward, and the Coalition for Immokalee [Florida] Workers. Worker centers often fill a void for those who qualify as "independent contractors" and thereby escape the provisions of the NLRA. Taxi drivers in New York City, for example, require a "medallion" (or permit) to drive in the city. This medallion is leased to the driver for a twelve-hour shift only, making them independent contractors and ineligible for union organizing.

Although worker centers have a two-decade history, their relationship with organized labor has only recently begun to flourish. The AFL-CIO and

the CtW federation have both been actively involved in helping to fund and collaborate with various worker centers. The benefits of this relationship are mutual. As Ana Avendaño, director of immigration and community action at the AFL-CIO, explains, “Workers’ centers are movements in search of institutions. And our unions are often institutions in search of movements.”³²

The AFL-CIO has publicly announced that worker centers are “solidarity partners” in their efforts to expand the labor movement and to fight for pro-worker public policies.³³ The current AFL-CIO president, Richard Trumka, has outlined a cooperative approach in which labor unions assist worker centers. In 2011, for example, the AFL-CIO welcomed the National Taxi Workers’ Alliance as the first worker center to affiliate with a local AFL-CIO body and to become formally chartered by the national AFL-CIO in more than a half century.³⁴ The AFL-CIO has also worked with the National Day Laborer Organizing Network to cooperate on the enforcement of labor laws at the state and local levels, health and safety regulations, and immigration reform.³⁵

Beyond the AFL-CIO, the CtW federation has been an active supporter of the alt-labor groups Fast Food Forward and the Fight for 15, which, as their names suggest, target the fast food industry and seek a \$15-an-hour minimum wage for workers (see Figure 2). UNITE-HERE has also worked with the Restaurant Opportunities Center, and the United Food and Commercial Workers have been a strong backer of Our Wal-Mart, which among several of its demands, seeks a \$25,000-a-year minimum salary for all Wal-Mart workers.³⁶

These close relationships have garnered the attention of prominent business groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the National Restaurant Association, which accuse worker centers of being fronts for labor unions. As Scott DeFife, an executive vice president at the National Restaurant Association, explains, “[Worker centers are] trying to have it both ways. They’re a union and not a union. They’re organizing workers but not organizing workers.”³⁷

The increased scrutiny from business groups comes on the heels of several significant labor victories. The Restaurant Opportunity Center (ROC), which helps to educate restaurant workers about their labor rights, has won various settlements from numerous employers, including a total of \$6.5 million in back wages and penalties, since its founding in 2001.³⁸ One of the group’s most well-publicized campaigns came against celebrity chef Mario Batali’s Del Posto restaurant in New York City. The ROC of New York brought charges of overtime violations and racial discrimination and ultimately reached a \$1.15 million settlement with Batali and his partners in which Del Posto also pledged to become one of the city’s “high road” employers.³⁹ It reached another high-profile settlement against another famed chef, Daniel Boulud, and his Daniel restaurant, after ROC brought charges that the restaurant discriminated against hiring Latino and Bangladeshi applicants as waiters. The ROC campaign included a protest outside the restaurant that featured a twelve-foot-tall inflatable cockroach.⁴⁰

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), a self-described “worker-based human rights organization internationally recognized for its achievements in the fields of corporate social responsibility, community organizing, and sustainable food,” has made national headlines for its “Fair Food Program.”⁴¹ Using a “bargaining up the supply chain” tactic where the entity at the top is the target rather than the direct employer of the workers, the CIW has led marches to the national headquarters of various supermarket and restaurant chains in a campaign to urge major suppliers to pay more for products, such as tomatoes, so that farm workers can earn more money. The campaign has led to agreements with chains such as Chipotle and even giants such as Wal-Mart, which agreed to pay 1.5 cents more per pound for Florida tomatoes.⁴²

Alt-labor groups have also aided workers seeking union representation. Make the Road New York (MRNY) and New York Communities for Change (NYCC), for example, assisted car wash workers in New York City. Their efforts ultimately helped these workers join the Retail Warehouse and Department Store Union and win a union contract.⁴³

Beyond the successful battles with employers, worker centers have led mass rallies in major cities and have lobbied state governments on behalf of workers’ rights. In 2010, the efforts of worker centers helped bring about a major legislative victory in the state of New York when lawmakers there passed the nation’s first “Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.” The legislation provides overtime pay and sexual harassment protections for domestic workers, as well as paid time off for domestic workers whom families hire to care for children or the elderly in their home. The state of Hawaii has since followed, passing its own Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

These victories illustrate the possibilities of the emerging partnership between worker centers and organized labor. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen if the alt-labor model can sustain itself over the long run. Membership at worker centers is still only a small fraction of the workforce, and they are dependent on outside funding and support. Still, Alt-labor deserves notice for the gains it has made for workers in a difficult environment and for its potential to transform the labor movement into a viable force in the twenty-first century.

New Electoral Strategies: Expanding Outreach

Similar to its approach with alt-labor organizations, the labor movement has also expanded its outreach to nonunion workers in the political arena. The U.S. Supreme Court’s controversial decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), most known for freeing corporations to spend unlimited sums from their general treasuries on independent campaign expenditures, also gave labor unions the ability to expand their political mobilization efforts beyond union households. Until the ruling, the Taft-Hartley Act had restricted union spending to political communications with active members and their families only.

Although founded before the *Citizens United* ruling, the organization Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, has taken the lead in organized labor's efforts to expand its political ground game. With 3.2 million members, Working America connects nonunion workers to the labor movement. Working America targets "working class moderate" neighborhoods, going door-to-door with paid organizers who discuss workers' concerns and issues, such as paid sick leave.⁴⁴ Workers who are receptive to this message become recruits to join the organization. In election years, canvassers return to the neighborhoods to encourage its Working America members to vote for the candidates who have received Working America's endorsement. These canvassers receive training and briefings, including how to respond to specific television ads that may be drawing attention.⁴⁵

During the 2012 election, Working America claimed to reach 3 million undecided, low-turnout, leaning, and swing voters.⁴⁶ Internal exit polls from Working America indicated that large majorities of its members voted with the organization's endorsed candidates. This included support from two-thirds of its members for President Obama and nearly three-fourths for U.S. Senate candidates Sherrod Brown of Ohio, Tim Kaine of Virginia, and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts.⁴⁷

For the 2014 election, the AFL-CIO announced that it planned over the next several years to establish Working America chapters in every state.⁴⁸ For the 2014 election, Working America's efforts include a heavy emphasis on get-out-the-vote efforts that include 400 paid canvassers to knock on more than 5,000 doors every night of the week over the final months of the election in states with competitive and important races.⁴⁹ The targets are five U.S. Senate races in the states of Alaska, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, and North Carolina; four gubernatorial races in the states of Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, and Pennsylvania; and seven states—Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Washington—where partisan control of the state legislature is competitive.⁵⁰ Working America estimates contact with 135,000 households (216,000 voters) in Kentucky; 150,000 households (250,000 voters) in Alaska; 225,000 households (360,000 voters) in Michigan; and 150,000 households (250,000 voters) in North Carolina.⁵¹

Beyond electoral politics, Working America has involved itself in policy battles. In North Carolina, where union membership is at the lowest percentage in the nation (3%), Working America has built a 30,000-member organization in the state.⁵² Working North Carolina has joined other progressive organizations and activists in opposing the conservative agenda of state lawmakers on issues such as voter identification laws, cuts to social programs, tax breaks for wealthy citizens, and repeal of the Racial Justice Act, through what became known as Moral Monday protests (see Figure 3). In May of 2014, for instance, Working North Carolina members participated in the "Pots and Spoons" protest in which picketers use kitchen utensils to create noise to bring attention to their concerns about the policies of the governor and state legislature.⁵³

Figure 2 Working America Invitation to Participate in North Carolina's Moral Monday Demonstrations

Since 2012, it's become obvious how much our lawmakers in Raleigh don't stand for us. They're after working people like you and me in order to benefit their rich, corporate buddies.

But we can stand up to them. Can you join me in Raleigh on Monday?

Gov. Pat McCrory and House Speaker Thom Tillis continue to dismantle our rights. They've suppressed our right to vote, they refuse to expand Medicaid or help the unemployed, and they have cut funding to programs that benefit those most in need. Then, recently, they tried to stop us from making our voices heard in Raleigh.

This Monday, we're meeting in Raleigh to continue our Moral Mondays demonstrations and let Gov. McCrory and Thom Tillis know that they can't silence us.

Stand up for working families this Monday.

What: Working Families Moral Monday

When: Monday, June 16, 5 p.m.

Where: Halifax Mall
300 N. Salisbury St.
Raleigh, NC 27603

This Moral Monday rally is focusing specifically on working families like ours, and how our leaders continue to attack us every day.

Peter, we need you to join us on Monday and help make our voices heard. **Can you join us?**

I hope to see you there,

Carolyn Smith
North Carolina State Director
Working America

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Sources:

In addition to the involvement and activism of Working America to expand the AFL-CIO's reach to working-class nonunion members, labor unions have made strong efforts to appeal to and mobilize minority voters. The AFL-CIO, for instance, has worked closely with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement. Richard Trumka and other union leaders have also made it a point to emphasize organized labor's commitment to civil rights. In September of 2014, Trumka

visited St. Louis, Missouri, just outside of the town of Ferguson, where a young, unarmed African American, Michael Brown, was shot and killed by police officer Darren Wilson. Speaking to the union's Missouri chapter, Trumka told the crowd, "I'm talking about race in America and what that means for our communities, our movement, and our nation. Because the reality is that while a young man named Michael Brown died just a short distance from us in Ferguson from gunshot wounds from a police officer, other young men of color have died and will die in similar circumstances in communities all across this country. . . . The test of our movement's commitment to our legacy is not whether we post Dr. King's picture in our union halls; it is do we take up his fight when the going gets tough—when the fight gets real against the evils that still exist today."⁵⁴

In southern California and other areas with large Latino populations, organized labor's public support for immigrant rights and a living wage has been especially significant in building trust within those communities. Maria Elena Durazo, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, explained that in cities such as Los Angeles the labor movement "has historically advocated for issues that directly affect Latinos, most notably around immigration reform and living wage. We advocate for organized and unorganized Latino workers. We're seen as a significant defender and fighter for Latinos."⁵⁵ She added that labor's strong community ties and outreach to the Latino community have been significant in improving the effectiveness of labor's efforts to mobilize Latinos during elections. In her words, "We're more effective because we don't just talk to voters and community members during election season. And we aren't just talking politics. The labor movement is part of the community. We are communicating and addressing a broader set of issues that they care about on an ongoing basis. As a result, we've become a credible messenger."⁵⁶

While the 2010 elections resulted in a landslide victory for Republicans across the nation, the state of California was one of the few exceptions. In the two major statewide elections—for U.S. Senate and for governor—both Democrats won despite facing well-financed Republican opponents, with strong support from Latino voters contributing to those victories. Democrat Barbara Boxer earned 65 percent of the Latino vote compared to 29 percent for Republican Carly Fiorina in California's U.S. Senate contest.⁵⁷ In California's gubernatorial race, Democrat Jerry Brown won 64 percent of the Latino vote compared to 31 percent for Republican Meg Whitman.⁵⁸ As Figure 4 illustrates, organized labor made tailored appeals to the Latino community on behalf of Democrats, such as Jerry Brown. These and similar efforts by organized labor in other states with large Latino populations have been shown to have a significant effect on Latino political participation.⁵⁹

Beyond targeted appeals to working-class and minority voters, labor unions, similar to most other organized interests, attempt to reach the general

Figure 3 Labor Targeted Message to Latinos for Jerry Brown, 2010



Dear Friends,

Democrat Jerry Brown helped Cesar Chavez when other politicians didn't.

Democrat Jerry Brown helped Mother Teresa care for the poor.

Jerry Brown is a true friend to our community.

Republican Meg Whitman has two faces. On English television she attacks immigrants. On Spanish television Whitman says she is our friend.

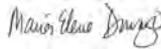
Republicans want to bring Arizona's law to California.

We need our next Governor to stop them.

Tuesday Yes... we vote.

If we vote on Tuesday, November 2 we tell Republicans – No Arizona here!

Sincerely,



Maria Elena Durazo
Los Angeles County
Federation of Labor AFL-CIO



Estimados amigos,

El demócrata Jerry Brown ayudó a César Chávez cuando otros políticos, no lo hicieron.

El demócrata Jerry Brown ayudó a la Madre Teresa a cuidar de los pobres.

Jerry Brown es un verdadero amigo a nuestra comunidad.

La republicana Meg Whitman tiene dos caras. En la televisión Inglés ataca a los inmigrantes. En la televisión español Whitman dice que ella es nuestra amiga.

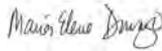
Los republicans quieren traer la ley de Arizona a California.

Necesitamos que nuestro próximo Gobernador las detenga.

Martes Sí ... votemos.

Si votamos el Martes, 02 de noviembre le decimos a los republicanos-No Arizona aquí!

Atentamente,



Maria Elena Durazo
Los Angeles County
Federation of Labor AFL-CIO

Paid for by Los Angeles County Federation of Labor
AFL-CIO Council on Political Education. Not authorized
by a Candidate or a committee controlled by a candidate.



Source:

public through television advertising. In 2014, the AFL-CIO took aim at the agenda of billionaires Charles and David Koch and their organization Americans for Prosperity with their “Koch sisters” ad campaign. In the thirty-second ad, Karen Koch of Michigan and Joyce Koch of New Jersey introduce themselves with Karen telling the viewer that they are “average women who have raised families and worked hard all our lives.”⁶⁰ Joyce explains, “We’re not biological sisters, but sisters in spirit.” She adds, “We don’t have billions to spend on political campaigns.”⁶¹ Karen then concludes, “But, we do have our convictions, and our voices. We think that’s important. If you agree, then join us. We can all be a nation of Koch sisters.”⁶² The AFL-CIO ran the ad campaign in the battleground states of Kentucky and Michigan, and nationally on cable, to counterbalance the \$125 million ad campaign of Americans for Prosperity—an ad campaign that largely attacked the policies of President Obama and Democrats in Congress.⁶³ Consistent with its larger outreach strategy, the AFL-CIO’s ad campaign sought to connect with a wide audience—in this instance, the middle class.

Overall, labor’s political efforts have had a mixed record of success in recent years, helping Democrats to major victories in the 2006, 2008, and 2012 elections. Unions, however, also failed to avert the historic landslide defeat for Democrats in the 2010 election, leading to the protests in Madison and several legislative defeats that will make it even more difficult for unions to organize. These results suggest that organized labor’s declining numbers do limit its ability to “reward its friends” and “punish its enemies.” Nonetheless, by expanding its outreach beyond union members, organized labor has shown a willingness to adapt to changing circumstances and has done so with a strategy that has the potential to rebuild the labor movement in a way that offers a voice to more working Americans than ever before.

Conclusion

Despite major setbacks for the labor movement that have included huge losses in the percentage of private sector union membership over the past six decades and recent attacks on unions in the public sector by Republican governors such as Scott Walker, the labor movement has responded in innovative ways in an effort to adapt to its current challenging environment. With labor law reform unlikely to happen, the prospects of a major organizing turnaround seem dubious, particularly with two additional states—Indiana and Michigan—recently passing right-to-work laws. On the surface, these grim realities would seem to spell organized labor’s eventual demise.

Beneath the surface, however, the labor movement has shifted its attention away from traditional activities. Through alternative strategies, led by alt-labor organizations, the labor movement is reaching workers beyond the union ranks. Expanded outreach to working-class and minority voters guides

much of labor's electoral strategies as well. These adaptations have begun a transformative process for the labor movement. Whether labor's evolution will allow it to survive and perhaps thrive is still unclear. What is clear, however, is that organized labor is adapting to challenging times. The success or failure of these adaptations seems destined to determine whether organized labor can be a relevant social and political force throughout the twenty-first century.

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