

# 2013 THE YEAR OF THE UNION PAYBACK

*by Minnesota Democrats*



The following bills were sponsored by legislative Democrats this session—and most were passed into law—in order to pay back unions for their financial support from the 2012 election cycle. The goals of these proposals are to help unions grow their membership, which in turn will allow more hardworking taxpayer dollars to be stolen and funneled to Democrats in the hopes that they will further develop and maintain their legislative majorities.

**HF 92 – MINIMUM WAGE:** Pushes up union employee wages through collective bargaining (contracts are sometimes tied to an amount or percentage above minimum wage). Passed House.

**HF 95, HF 1069, HF 1801 – LABOR CONTRACTS:** Ratified union contracts with employee raises, as well as step and lane increases, without forcing employees to pay more of their health insurance costs. Signed into law.

**HF 573 – STATEWIDE PUBLIC SCHOOL HEALTH PLAN:** This Education Minnesota initiative would have required most public school districts to enroll in the Public Employee Insurance Program for health coverage. Taking health benefits out of the collective bargaining process makes it easier for unions to negotiate higher wages. Died in committee.

**HF 588 – NURSE STAFF RATIOS:** Would have required hospitals to staff units at a level consistent with standards set by a nurse and nurse union dominated committee, and maintain a patient assignment committee dominated by the same. A study of these ratios was signed into law.

**HF 601 – LOCKOUTS:** Restricts organizations that lock out employees as a result of failed labor negotiations from receiving public subsidies, and allows units of government power to assess penalties based on value of previously received benefits. Died in committee.

**HF 602 – LOCKOUTS:** Allows for employees experience work loss as a result of a lockout an extra 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. Signed into law.

**SF 840 – SICK LEAVE:** Mandates that sick leave can be used to care for specified relatives other than the employee's child. Local governments estimate that it will cost \$25-27 million statewide, and the state estimated an annual \$9.9 million cost. Signed into law.

**HF 883 – TRADE POLICY:** Creates a trade policy advisory group where union membership is guaranteed. Although international trade agreements are infrequent and a state's role is minimal, the advisory group is permanent and costs \$100,000 per biennium. Signed into law.

**HF 950 – CHILDCARE/PCA UNIONIZATION:** Forces a unionization vote on in-home childcare providers and personal care attendants. Signed into law.

**HF 1765 – LABOR PEACE AGREEMENTS:** Would require an owner of a hospitality project (hotels, hotel-restaurants, convention centers, sports venues) to enter into a Labor Peace Agreement with the union seeking to represent the covered workers as a condition of receiving public benefits. Passed House.

**SF 489 – PENSIONS BILL:** Proposal bailed out struggling state employee pension plans. Signed into law.

**HF548 – AMERICAN STEEL BILL:** Requires that American steel products be used in any public works contracts financed by state appropriations or local or state tax revenue. Died in committee.

**HF542 – WHISTLEBLOWER BILL:** Provides “whistleblower” protection to state employees. Sponsored by MAPE. Signed into law.