



Pennsylvania Conference of Teamsters

Strength in Numbers 95,000

William Hamilton, President & Eastern PA Legislative Coordinator – Joseph Molinero, Sec.-Treasurer & Western PA Legislative Coordinator – Tim O'Neill, Consultant – Dan Grace, Trustee & Legislative Advisor – Robert Baptiste, Esq. Legal Advisor

LEGISLATIVE ACTION ALERT

CRACKDOWN ON DEMONSTRATIONS AND RALLYS- ARE WE SLOWLY TURNING INTO A POLICE STATE?

Robert Baptiste, Legal Counsel to the PA Conference of Teamsters directed the Conference's attention to an article posted in the *New York Times* © newspaper entitled, "**Across the Country, a Republican Push to Rein in Protesters.**"

Attorney Baptiste said the "article reflects that an increasing number of state legislatures that are controlled by conservative Republicans are proposing and adopting restrictions on protests." "Obviously, there are significant First Amendment issues that will clearly impact the ability of Unions to get their message out to

the public and to elected officials", he said. "As we have seen with other issues, such as paycheck protection, this will soon be added to the package of anti-labor measures promoted by the Koch Brothers and the right to work legislators. While they will claim that public safety is their motivating concern, it is clearly designed to intimidate people and to criminalize protest activity", Baptiste concluded. The PA Conference will be watching this type of restrictive legislation should it rear its ugly head through-out the PA Conference states.

Highlights of laws in various states restricting protests, as stated in the NYT's article

- A Tennessee state representative introduced legislation that would relieve motorists of any liability should they accidentally hit someone deliberately blocking a street
- An Iowa bill would make blocking high-speed roads a felony punishable by up to five years in prison and \$7,500 in fines, similar legislation in Mississippi would impose a fine of up to \$10,000
- Washington State, a Republican senator filed legislation that would make it a felony to commit "**economic terrorism**," defined as intentionally breaking the law to intimidate private citizens or to obstruct economic activity
- A Minnesota bill would allow cities to sue demonstrators who violate the law for the cost of policing their protests.
- In North Carolina, a legislator promised to propose a measure making it illegal to "threaten, intimidate or retaliate" against state officials-View Article:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/us/when-does-protest-cross-a-line-some-states-aim-to-toughen-laws.html>





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22,600 retired coal miners and widows told that their earned health care benefits would be cut off in 60 days

With some of the country's largest coal companies in bankruptcy, about 120,000 retired miners and their families in West Virginia could lose their pension and health care accounts. For many families in this region, this means losing their only regular source of income. (Jorge Ribas/The Washington Post)

United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) International President Cecil E. Roberts issued the following statement on March 1, 2017: "Letters advising some 22,600 retired coal miners and widows that their earned health care benefits would be cut off in 60 days were mailed from the UMWA Health and Retirement Funds on March 1, 2017, causing needless anxiety and concern for these elderly Americans. This travesty is entirely caused because a small minority of those on Capitol Hill simply refuses to honor America's moral

commitment to our nation's retired miners. Although many promises were made to coal miners to help them, it looks like some politicians now got amnesia and the miners are going to get the **shaft**.

It was alright to use taxpayer's money to bail out Wall Street. However, when it comes to the hard-working men and women that have helped heat, feed, build, serve, and deliver all goods for our great state and nation, we no longer matter.

Because of the promises made to coal miners from the Trump Administration, the PA Conference of Teamsters will be gauging the outcome of this critical issue since it will give the PA Conference a clear indication as to where this new administration stands on private sector pensions and workers' benefits.

These Legislative Action Alerts will be posted on the PA Conference of Teamsters web site at www.pacfteamsters.com Go to the home page and click on the black box titled Legislative Action Alert Bulletins. Please share these alerts with your officers, agents and stewards.

