



Political Action Update

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An At Will Employment State

I am sure most people have heard about the firing of a Fort Dodge Dental Assistant for her being too attractive. Many of you may say, “Hey they can’t do that! “

Well, yes they can and they did. Justice Edward Mansfield stated that such firings were not illegal and not unlawful discrimination because they are motivated by feelings and emotions, not gender. If you are like me I am sure you just thought Bull! Iowa is an at will employment state. This simply means that unless an **employment contract** details the duration of the employment relationship an employer can terminate you for any reason they want, at any time and without any notice. State and Federal laws are supposed to make it illegal to discriminate against an employee or applicant based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, creed, sexual orientation, sexual identity or disability. In my opinion all this does is give an employer a list of things he or she cannot use for firing someone.

This all brings me back to an employment contract. One great way to obtain a contract is to collectively bargain for one. Collective bargaining is a method of negotiation in which employees use authorized union representatives to assist them. In the contract it will state that the company recognizes the union as the sole collective bargaining agency for all employees covered by and coming under the provisions of the agreement for the purpose of collective bargaining in respect to rates of pay, wages, hours of employment and other

conditions of employment.

It may also declare that the company, the employees and the union recognize the fact that harmony, cooperation and understanding in their relationship with each other are essential to the welfare of the parties hereto. It may further recognize that the goodwill of the public is important and with a sincere acknowledgment of these facts, the company, the employees and the union pledge themselves to fair and understanding dealings with each other.

This contract will state that no employee shall be discharged or disciplined without good and sufficient cause. Should there be any dispute between the company and the union concerning the existence of good and sufficient cause for discharge or discipline, the dispute shall be adjusted as a grievance.

The contract may have an article with a list of prohibited acts that allow the company to suspend or discharge an employee (with just cause) for violating these spelled out prohibited acts.

All of this contract language makes it very difficult if not impossible for you and me to be terminated for being too attractive. It is entirely beyond me why anyone would want to work in

an at will State without the protection of a collective bargaining agreement.

I am betting that most CEOs in this country have a contract. Why can’t you?

Well, you can. The National Labor Relations Act states under section 7 that employees shall have
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“ If I go and stand in everyone’s way at work, they’d fire me and escort me off the property. But you can have your senators stand in the way of the whole process and still collect a paycheck. ”

—Charlie Treadway

Photo Credit: unionworkerafclcio

Tell Harkin and Grassley to confirm NLRB nominees

For decades, American labor law helped working people come together to have a voice on the job which in turn gave them a say in our economy and in our politics and public life. This freedom to organize, helped produce the greatest period of sustained and broad prosperity in our country's history. In order to rebuild our economy and level the playing field for all working people – union and non-union – the law protecting workers' rights must be enforced. That's the role of the National Labor Relations Board – and it needs to work.

That doesn't mean protecting the rights of working people *as opposed to* the rights of employers. It means ensuring the NLRB's ability to promote commerce by governing the relationship between workers and employers.

But currently the NLRB is under unprecedented attack by extremist Congressional Republicans and corporate lobbyists who want to weaken the board's power to protect workers who choose to organize and form unions on the job.

In the face of partisan obstruction threats in Washington, President Obama made three Board recess appointments. But an unprecedented and radical decision by conservative U.S. District Court judges has put these appointments in jeopardy.

A union Steward at Fort Dearborn Co. was

fired and told the company was tired of the "union circus". The NLRB rules that the firing was illegal and ordered the company to rehire Marcus, but the company has refused. Marcus recently lost his home to foreclosure because of the financial distress he faced after being unlawfully fired.

Without a functioning NLRB, people were fired, not for doing something wrong, but for doing something that's protected by law. And yet their lives have been thrown into turmoil, and they have no effective recourse.

CALL HARKIN AND GRASSELY—Today
202-224-3121

President Obama has taken an important step towards restoring stability to our system of labor-management relations by nominating a full, bi-partisan package of nominees to the NLRB.

Iowa's working people can't wait in limbo any longer.

Responsibility for providing needed stability and the functioning NLRB working people need and deserve is now up to our senators Tom Harkin and Charles Grassley and members of the Senate should act quickly and confirm the President's full slate of nominees.

Ken Sagar, President, Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO



 **Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans®**

ADVANCING OUR LEGACY

Iowa Alliance for Retired Americans 6th annual Convention will be held at Prairie Meadows, July 24th, 2013. 9:30 AM to 4 PM
515-262-9571 or iowa.alliance@gmail.com

THE DAY WILL COME

QC Next Up: Labor History Tour

By Tracy Leone

On June 8, QC Next Up took a bus to Chicago to tour some of Labor's most significant historic sites. Young workers visited the Haymarket Monument in the Forest Home Cemetery and learned about the struggle for an eight-hour workday, four labor leaders who were wrongfully executed by the state, and the subsequent establishment of May 1st as International Labor Day. It is also the only cemetery monument that has been designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Dept. Of Interior.

From Forest Home, they travelled South to Pullman where they learned about the company-owned town, the Railroad workers strike of 1877, and the Battle of the Viaduct from tour guides Dick Stanton and Paul Durica, as well as docents from the Illinois Labor History Society. They then stopped at the Argus Brewery, a micro-brewery located near Pullman in the former Schlitz Town, where workers forbidden from drinking on Pullman property could get a cold one.

The last site of the tour was the Haymarket Square in downtown Chicago where they visited the Haymarket Memorial erected by the City of Chicago in 2004 and marks the site of the May 4, 1884, labor rally in which 11 demonstrators and 7 police officers were killed.

QC Next Up topped of the tour with one last stop at the Haymarket Brewery just up the block where they were joined by members of the Chicago Young



Workers Group.

The significance of Haymarket isn't recognized well-enough by those in the labor movement.

QC Next Up has booklets for sale and free cemetery maps if you who want to better understand Haymarket and the early history of Organized Labor.

Contact Brett Utz: 309-738-1521.

An At Will Employment State

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the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining.

Section 7 also gives you the right to refrain from any or all of such activities except to the extent that such right may be affected by an agreement requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of employment as authorized in section 8(a)(3).

The bottom line is, one only needs to read the papers or watch the news to find that many major corporations and some other employers (not all) are treating people poorly and in many cases violating employee rights and safety. This behavior should not be allowed to continue. This is the United States of America. You have rights. Know what they are and where to turn when your rights at the work place have been violated.

Rick Moyle

Executive Director

Hawkeye Labor Council AFL-CIO

IOWA FEDERATION OF LABOR, AFL-CIO

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Upcoming ...

- July 1: Know your Rights. Iowa City
- July 2: Chained CPI Events, DSM and Waterloo
- July 4: Independence Day
- July 24: Iowa ARA Conference
- July 27: Hawkeye Steak Fry
- Aug. 2 Hawkeye Blood Drive.
- Aug. 15: Midwest Women's Summer School
- Aug. 17: Hawkeye Golf Tournament
- Aug. 19: IFL Executive Council Meeting
- Aug. 20: CLC and Young Workers Conference
- Aug. 21—23 IFL Convention
- Aug. 22: Hall of Fame Dinner & Awards
- Sept. 2: Labor Day

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

2nd annual Iowa AFL-CIO Members Choice Award

Presented for the outstanding video/slide show produced by union members.

Length: 3 minutes max. **Format:** Video or slide show of pictures; music/sound/silent all acceptable

How to submit: Submit as a DVD or flash drive or email to lance@iowaaflico.org

Deadline for Submissions: August 1

For more info: Contact Lance Coles at 515-262-9571 or lance@iowaaflico.org



Building the Movement

Iowa Federation of Labor
57th Annual Convention
August 21—23

August 20—Young Workers
and CLC Conference

August 22—Hall of Fame
Dinner and Ceremony

Prairie Meadows—Altoona

