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Protect your job & your rights

Organize now for November

by Tom Suhrbur, retired Illinois Education Association

Although he has been governor since 2015, Bruce Rauner has not been able to get his anti-union Turn-around Agenda enacted. Most of his proposals are aimed at the building trades workers and public employees – the most highly organized unions in the state. Here is a brief description of his Turnaround Agenda.

- ◆ Repeal the prevailing wage law: Lower wages for public construction projects undermining building trade unions.
- ◆ “Reform” workers compensation: Lower benefits paid to workers injured at work -- accidents often occur on construction sites.
- ◆ Enact Open Shop (“Right To Work”) legislation: Undermine unions resulting in lower wages and benefits for all workers.
- ◆ Cut unemployment benefits: Construction workers often face layoffs during the winter months.
- ◆ Cut pension benefits for teachers and other public employees.
- ◆ Privatize public services: Outsource public jobs to low wage private companies.
- ◆ Restrict collective bargaining rights for teachers and other public employees.
- ◆ Opposed raising the minimum wage.

While his rhetoric is aimed at unions, the policies that he is advocating would negatively impact non-union workers and their families as well. Weakening unions means lower wages and benefits for non-union employees.

Currently, Democrats hold large majorities in both houses of the state legislature blocking his plan to undermine

worker rights and protections. But that could change if he gets reelected in November. Whoever wins the race for governor will have control over redistricting of the state legislative maps following 2020 census. A Rauner win could result in gerrymandered maps that favor Republican Party candidates and enhance his ability to get his proposals enacted. These maps will determine election districts for the next ten years.

Voter turnout decides elections. In 2014, only 40.2% of the voting age population cast ballots in Illinois. (About 20% of Illinois voting age population is not even registered to vote.) Republican Bruce Rauner won 50.27% of the ballots that year; he was elected governor by just 20.2% of the eligible voting age population. The fact that about one-fifth of those eligible to vote are not even registered coupled with a low turnout of registered voters in 2014 enabled Rauner to win with barely 20%.

Labor unions need to educate their members about Rauner’s Turnaround Agenda and organize their members to vote in November. Union members and their families need to be registered to vote. Voters can register online in Illinois.

Online Voter Registration

<https://ova.elections.il.gov>

To Vote In Illinois:

- ◆ You must be a United States Citizen.
- ◆ You must be 18 on or before the date of the General Election.
- ◆ You must live in your election precinct at least 30 days prior to Election Day.

To Register Online, you will need:

- ◆ An Illinois Driver’s License or an Illinois State ID.
- ◆ The last four digits of your Social Security number.

Early voting begins February 8!