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The Right Flier

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Just ahead of the November referendum vote on Issue 2/Senate Bill 5, Rudy Fichtenbaum was invited to present the keynote address to the annual meeting of the Nebraska Conference of AAUP. What follows is the text of that address, which provides an insightful coda to the defeat of Issue 2/Senate Bill 5, as well as a broader framework for understanding what has led to that anti-worker legislation in Ohio and to similar legislation in other states.

The address was accented by a PowerPoint presentation that included many provocative graphs. These are available on our chapter website; see <http://www.wright.edu/administration/aaup/rf.pptx>

Marty Kich
President, AAUP-WSU

Is it Time to Occupy Higher Education?

Politics, the AAUP, and the Fight against SB 5

by
Rudy Fichtenbaum

In response to AAUP's statement of support for OWS and AAUP's significant contribution to the fight back against SB 5 the union busting bill in Ohio some of our members have questioned 1) whether we are becoming more engaged in politics and 2) is engagement in politics contrary to the mission of AAUP.

I have to say at the outset that until SB 5 my chapter and most of the other chapters in Ohio as well as the State Conference in Ohio largely stayed out of politics. Of course we fought back against attempts by some in the legislature to pass the "Academic Bill of Rights" and we have lobbied for more resources for higher education. We have worked with a coalition of "stakeholders" to preserve our pension system and provide health care for retirees. But these battles were either directly related to the stated mission of AAUP or narrowly related to our own economic self-interest.

For the most part, perhaps with the exception of the OEA and the OFT, no one in the labor movement in Ohio knew that AAUP existed, nor were they aware of the fact that we represent the majority of faculty at Ohio's four year institutions of higher education and that we are an important player in representing faculty at community colleges in Ohio as well.

Little did we know that our existence as a collection of independent unions concerned mostly about day to day issues on campus was about to change and I believe change forever.

The declining power of faculty and the erosion of tenure has been underway for decades. Many of our members, caught up in the increasing drive to publish as well as being pressured to spend more time teaching, brought about by the growing use of student evaluations, writing across the curriculum and the movement for assessment. Faculties in STEM disciplines are now largely expected to fund their own research programs through grants and contracts and not just at elite universities where they have lots of graduate students to help with research and have lighter teaching loads. Every university and college is feeling the need to diversify its sources of revenue and this means either bringing in more research dollars or developing more off-campus programs. Over the last fifty years or so, faculty on campus have become more alienated, relating more to other faculty through disciplinary organizations that support research and the development of specialized programs.

There is an old story about how you cook a frog. Supposedly if you dropped the frog into boiling water it would realize it was being cooked and it would jump out of the pot. So the way to cook a frog without having it jump out of the pot is to start out with a pot of cold water and gradually raise the temperature. The change is so slow that the frog doesn't notice that it is being cooked until it is too late. Well that is exactly what has been happening to faculty in higher education and the fact of the matter is that we are not alone.

We have slowly been cooking, headed toward extinction, as increasingly our jobs have been divided up and parceled out to more specialized workers. Today the majority of faculty members in higher education are contingent faculty. Universities increasingly rely on doctoral students and post-docs to assist with research. Advising and working directly with students is being farmed out to other academic professionals so that faculty can spend more time teaching and doing research. A number of years ago many of us worried about a frontal assault on tenure from outside the academy. In reality, the attack on tenure has been more insidious and has come from inside the academy. In some cases, by failing to speak out against the growing use of contingent faculty we have ourselves contributed to the erosion of tenure.

So in Ohio, like elsewhere, we were slowly being cooked. The failure of President Obama and the Democratic Party to deal effectively with the growing economic crisis led to stunning defeats for Democrats in the 2010 elections. Democrats lost control of the House, barely hung on to the Senate and in state after state were swept out of office bringing in to power extreme right wing governors like Scott Walker in Wisconsin, John Kasich in Ohio, Rick Snyder in Michigan, Rick Scott in Florida, and Chris Christie in New Jersey, along with legislators who would carry out their agendas. For years the working class had been weakened by attacks on organized labor and the erosion of our social safety net. Now facing the sharpest economic crisis since the Great Depression and emboldened by the Citizens United decision, the extreme right wing elements of the ruling class, people like the Koch brothers, decided this was a time to turn up the heat and further weaken the working class by breaking the back of the union movement.

The AAUP's purpose is to advance academic freedom and shared governance, to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education, and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

Why do we want academic freedom and shared governance? Why do we promote our right to defined professional values and standards for higher education? After all these are not simply goals in and of themselves. I believe that we want to protect academic freedom and shared governance and define professional values and establish standards for higher education to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good.

Of course that raises the question of what is the common good? I would argue that the common good is what is good for the overwhelming majority or to put it in OWS parlance what is good for the 99%. Clearly what is good for the Koch Brothers, Jaimie Diamond and others on Wall Street, those in the top 1%, is not good for most Americans. The common good does not imply unanimity. If that were true there would be no common good because there is nothing that is good for everyone. Instead we have to answer the question "Which Side Are You On," because there is "Them and Us."

When American corporations outsource jobs and when we engage in foreign policy to protect the interests of big oil and the military industrial complex, it is not in the interest of most Americans. So I would

start my argument by stating that the common good is what is good for the majority, which is a fundamental principle of democracy.

What does higher education have to do with promoting the common good? Big corporations would be perfectly happy if we just trained people to work and not to think very much about social and political problems. Just a couple of weeks ago, there was an article in *Inside Higher Education* that in Florida the governor has called for the elimination of anthropology and a state senator in Florida called for cuts in political science and psychology so the state can spend more money on STEM where people can get jobs. I guess no one has noticed that there are no jobs, STEM or otherwise.

Of course, to the extent that big corporations want people to think critically, they want to make sure that they will promote the agenda of the 1%; so the Koch brothers and other right-wing foundations are willing to endow chairs at universities to promote their agenda. For those of who were not aware of what has been happening, the Koch brothers funded two endowed chairs in economics at Florida State University. Writing about this in the *Gainesville Iguana* Juan Cole wrote: "The real scandal around the endowment by the Koch brothers of two chairs at Florida State University is that state universities now have to seek such outside money and accept strings. The reason they have to do so is that many state legislatures have chosen not to have state universities any more. At many "state universities" the state contribution to the general operating fund is less than 20 percent, falling toward 10 percent."

Why should people get a higher education? Is it really in the interest of the common good to promote higher education? Here I think we need to be very careful. Most would argue that if you get a education you will have a higher income and that is good for you and good for society.

But how true is this idea? Mainstream economists argue that education raises productivity and that workers are rewarded in accordance with their productivity. There is an element of truth in the idea that education raises productivity. However, it is not at all clear that higher productivity leads to higher earnings. While it is true that education can raise productivity, there is a fundamental fallacy with the notion that giving people more education automatically makes them more productive. In fact, economists teach their Principles of Economics students about this very fallacy, the fallacy of composition, which says that the whole is not

necessarily the sum of its parts. If everyone in society had a Ph.D. would the distribution of income be more equal? Think about what has happened to educational attainment in the U.S. It has, in a quantitative sense become more equal, although in a qualitative sense it may be more unequal.

However, when economists study this issue, they concentrate on the quantitative aspect of education for the most part. Let me tell you the dirty little secret that only most labor economists know. In reality, the best statistical models that we have that explain variation in earnings can only explain 30-35% of the variation in earnings. That means that 65-70% of what explains differences in earnings is simply a matter of chance. How is that for an explanation of why you should work hard, study hard, and stay in school? In reality, the economy to a large degree is like a lottery; only it is a lottery that is stacked against the poor. Only some of what individuals do influences outcomes. In the real world, it is the economic success of your parents and whom you know that largely determines what type of education you get and then what type of job you get.

I know this is hard to believe, but just look at any article in any major economics journal that explains earnings and you will see that most of the variation in earnings is unexplained by factors like education, work experience, "intelligence," race, gender, the region of the country you live in, whether you a union member, etc.

What this suggests is that there are social and political factors that determine the overall availability of opportunities and that education is one way of rationing the available opportunities. This view is, of course, consistent with the tremendous increase in income and wealth inequality that we have observed in recent years. The reality is that almost all of the gains in income have gone to the top one percent, not because they increased their education and became more productive, but because they largely control our social and political institutions.

So if we really believe that education is in the common good, it needs to be for more than just job training and raising people's incomes.

I think that most of us support the concept of a liberal education as being part of the common good because in true Jeffersonian fashion, we believe that an educated citizenry is essential for democracy. In fact, what has happened is that the growing level of inequality has undermined our democracy and threatens the common good.

Now let's put the current situation in higher education in historical context. From WW II until about 1980 (we can argue about the exact year but that is not really important), opportunity to get a college education was expanding. We had the GI bill. This was followed by the creation of the National Science Foundation and expanding financial aid for students. States were expanding their systems of higher education, building new universities in urban centers--places like Wright State--to provide access to higher education for ordinary Americans. It was also in the 1960s that we started building a system of community colleges, again with taxpayer money.

Before WW II college was largely for the elite, and many colleges were located in remote areas, college towns, far away from the unwashed masses. The elite universities, such as Harvard and Yale, all opposed the GI bill because they thought that giving money to ordinary people who had been drafted and allowing them to go to college would dilute the pool of college students with mediocre students.

It is not an accident that during the 1960s there was a great expansion of universities and colleges. This was all part of an era of reform that began with the civil rights movement in the 1950s, leading to the movement to expand women's rights and a series of social programs passed under the banner of the Great Society. This was also an era of great social upheaval, and it was precisely this activity that led to the creation of Medicare and Medicaid, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Clean Water and Clean Air acts, along with the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency. Although there were signs that this era was ending by the mid 1970's, it became clear that it was over with the onset of the so-called Reagan revolution of the 1980's.

Despite this increased access, the top universities, which are almost all private universities, still cater to the elite, and completing a college degree still depends more on income than on test scores.

Since the 1980s public support for higher education has waned. While the number of students has continued to increase, public support for higher education has declined, on a per student basis and on a real basis after accounting for inflation. Tuition started rising to make up the shortfall in state funding, and our students started taking on more and more debt. Why, despite all the rhetoric about the importance of higher education, has support for higher education declined?

Let me list four reasons, all of which suggest that if we want to protect the common good we will need to take political stands on certain key issues.

Reason number one for declining in support of higher education has been the explosion of spending at a state level on Medicaid. Why are medical costs rising so rapidly? I think there is pretty good evidence that our health care system wastes a lot of resources and that health care outcomes are not that great despite the fact that we spend a lot more per person than any other country in the world. What is the driving force controlling our current health care system that is preventing reform? Big insurance and drug companies, along with big bureaucracies that have developed in hospitals and medical practices to deal with insurance companies have help drive up health care costs. If we don't do something to control health care costs, spending on Medicaid will continue to eat into funds that could go to higher education. Who stands in the way of health care reform?

Reason number two is that in the 80s and 90s we decided to get tough on crime and lock up non-violent offenders many for simply possessing or using drugs. Mostly we have locked up a lot of poor people, and in the process, in many states we have disenfranchised these people and created a climate where they will never become productive members of society. We underfund our schools and provide a second- or third-rate education to a large portion of our population who cannot afford to live in suburbs or send their kids to private schools. In many communities, there is little opportunity, and so people turn to drugs and crime and then we spend money locking them up. We have never fully funded programs like head start, despite the fact that there is overwhelming evidence that these programs have a major positive impact on people which lasts well into their 20s and 30s. Kids who go to head start are more likely to get jobs, less likely to end up in prison, and much more likely to have higher earnings. If we don't address problems in poor communities and expand opportunity, then we will end up paying for this policy by having to lock up people, and it costs a lot more to lock someone up than it costs to send him or her to college.

Reason number three for declines in support for education is the decline in tax rates pushed by people who believe that government plays too large a role in our economy and that the best way to get rid of government is to starve it by cutting taxes,

particularly for those at the upper end of the income distribution. So a succession of governors and legislatures in places like Ohio, which have been controlled by tax-cutting politicians who are interested in the well-being of the rich, have robbed higher education of the resources we need to provide a higher quality education at a price that the 99% can afford without going into debt.

Federal support for higher education has also waned, affected by the same forces. Right-wing politicians have been willing to spend trillions to defend the interests of oil companies, using the pretense of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism as an excuse to expand military spending to unprecedented levels. With the end of the cold war, the military industrial complex had to find some excuse to keep spending vast resources on the military. Without the boogiemaster of communism, cold warriors such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, along with lots of "blue dog" Democrats, have looked for an excuse to reshape government, expanding military spending and cutting spending for education and social programs, including financial aid for college students. This has resulted in dramatically rising levels of debt among college students, many of who will never get the kind of jobs that have been promised and that will allow them to pay off these debts. Increasingly, the 99% find themselves in a system of peonage from which they will never escape, while the top 1% grows ever richer.

Reason number four is the financial meltdown and the economic crisis that has ensued, leading to even more cuts in spending in higher education. Who was responsible for this meltdown? Who created the financial weapons of mass job destruction? It was "Wall Street"--aka the big banks and hedge funds. We the taxpayers, the 99%, bailed them out, and now they are making more money than ever while we those who are lucky enough to have jobs are taking pay cuts, losing pensions, and paying more for health care. And we are the fortunate ones because we have jobs. Millions of Americans aren't that lucky. The rising level of joblessness, along with widespread pay cuts, has eroded the tax base of most states and the federal government, resulting in more cuts in funding for higher education.

As an aside, it is no mistake that this attack on public spending, an attack on the common good, coincides with a big attack on unions. A watershed moment for the labor movement was when President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers for striking. This action signaled that it was open season on unions, and the slow decline in the labor movement, which began

during the McCarthy period with the purge of progressives from the union movement, accelerated to the point where only about 6% of workers in the private sector are represented by unions. By the way, public opinion poll show that the majority, about 58 percent of Americans, would join a union if given a choice. So the fact that a large majority of Americans would join unions but only a small minority are actually union members says something about the climate for unions in the U.S.

As unions were weakened, big corporations (the 1%) started promoting the politics of resentment: I don't have a pension, I don't have health care--so neither should you. Rather than being seen as advocates for social justice, representing the interests of the vast majority of working Americans, unions were turned into a "special interest" by the corporate media.

By the mid 1990's organized labor started making some major changes, playing a much more active role in politics, and started making some gains in organizing, particularly in the public sector. But, unfortunately, those gains were not enough to offset the loss of union members due to declines in manufacturing jobs resulting from our ballooning trade deficit spurred on by outsourcing and "free trade agreements."

That brings us to the recent attack on public workers. I spoke at a fundraiser for the SB 5/ Issue 2 campaign just a couple of weeks ago. One of the points that I made was that before the 1950s most Americans did not consider themselves to be part of the middle class. The notion of a broad based middle class, widely used today, was a social construct of the 1950s to try and convince American workers that they were not really workers. Probably one of the first uses of the term "middle class" in the sense that it is recognized today, was by the sociologist C. Wright Mills in his book *White Collar: the American Middle Classes* published in 1951. Along with the concept of the "middle class," the notion of "people's capitalism" was also promoted as more and more Americans owned stock. Sixty years later, even taking into account the rise of mutual funds, not that much has changed with respect to the ownership of America's corporations. They are still largely owned and controlled by the top 1%.

Before the 1950's the vast majority of Americans knew they were part of the working class. They worked for wages and salaries and if they lost their jobs, it was a disaster. Unlike the 1%, when workers lose jobs, they lose their cars, their homes, their

health insurance, their pensions, and their ability to send their kids to college. In some cases they even lose their lives.

What happened to the people who ran Lehman Bros.? Somehow, I don't think they are living on skid row. They probably have not lost their houses, and I bet their kids are still going to college and graduating without any debt. The term middle class was developed to convince people that they were not workers so that they would not identify as workers and organize unions to fight for the interests of workers. In reality, the people who today largely consider themselves as part of the "middle class" are workers, workers who had attained a modicum of dignity, owning houses, taking vacations, sending their kids to college, and ultimately retiring before dying.

When their wages stopped rising, they sent more family members into the labor force to keep their standard of living from falling. As a result, there was a dramatic rise in the labor force participation of married women. As the labor force participation of women began to reach the level of participation for men, that avenue of dealing with declining wages, cuts in benefits, and the gutting of pensions was no longer open. So then workers turned to debt, and we all know how that turned out.

As has been demonstrated by the OWS movement, the current economic crisis has caused people to begin questioning the very nature of our economic system. The extreme right wing sensed the danger of the moment. Understanding the potential that organized labor could play in channeling discontent into political action and not content with the massive amount of wealth they have amassed over the last 40 years, they decided the best defense was a good offense and so they decided to break the back of organized labor.

They launched a national campaign to destroy the labor movement where it was strongest, in the public sector. Without unions supporting progressive candidates and leading a movement for progressive change, the extreme right wing would have unfettered control over our political system, especially in light of the Citizen's United decision.

First up to bat were the unions in Wisconsin. Next, came attacks on public unions in Ohio, then Michigan, Florida and New Jersey. The two most extreme attacks have been in Wisconsin and Ohio. If the extreme right succeeds in breaking the back of the labor movement in Wisconsin and Ohio they

stand to gain unfettered control over our political system.

SB 5 was introduced in the Ohio State Senate at the beginning of 2011. It

- Eliminated collective bargaining for state employees;
- Prohibited public employees from striking;
- Eliminated binding arbitration as a way to settle contract disputes for safety forces;
- Required merit pay for all public employees, including police and firefighters;
- Provided a minimum that public employees must pay for pensions and health insurance;
- Severely limited topics subject to collective bargaining by eliminating the requirement to bargain over the continuation, modification or deletion of a provision of a collective bargaining agreement covering either a mandatory or a permissive subject of bargaining.

So when the Ohio legislature began considering the passage of SB 5, the Ohio Conference of the AAUP as well as individual chapters recognized that our existence was at stake. We quickly agreed that we needed a unified strategy to deal with SB 5. First, the Board of the Ohio Conference set up a communications committee to develop talking points and send out material to our members and to the press. We had just hired a new Executive Director for the State Conference, and without her knowledge of Ohio politics and her hard work, we would not have been able to develop an effective fight back movement among faculty in Ohio.

Next, we decided that someone from the Board should testify before the Senate Insurance, Commerce and Labor Committee. I was selected to testify because I was a member of the Board of the Ohio Conference and a labor economist. When the bill was first introduced, it did not contain the Yeshiva language with which so many of us are now familiar.

Because we really had no strong ties to the rest of the labor movement and we are highly paid relative to other public employees, we decided that our testimony should focus on the broader issues raised by SB 5. Many other public-employee unions had made major concessions because of the impact of the economic crisis on the revenues of state and local governments. University faculty had not made concessions because unlike state and local governments, universities and colleges were able to

raise tuition and Governor Strickland had spared universities and colleges from major cuts.

Other unions testified about the potential effects of SB 5 on their members. Our testimony focused on the impact of the bill on public employees in general and was packed full of facts. We cited studies to show that public employees were not over-compensated and were not the cause of the state's budget problems. We pointed out the need for a world-class system of higher education, but mostly our testimony focused on the overall impact of the bill on all public employees.

The day that I testified, the Capitol was packed and all of the testimony was being played out on speakers to people in the rotunda. Toward the end of my testimony, I said: "We need police and firefighters. These people put their lives on the line every day. There are no statues of Wall Street bankers who have died keeping us safe or carrying children from burning buildings." At that point, I received a round of applause from the pro-union forces inside the hearing room, and the crowd in the rotunda erupted with applause that was so loud we could hear it in the hearing room. I mention this line in particular because too often when we speak to the public, we speak as if we were teaching a class. It is important to recognize that we can educate people, but we also need to speak in a way that resonates with ordinary folks and will therefore be picked up by the media. That line was widely quoted in the press while all of the facts and figures I presented were ignored. This is an important lesson for us to learn.

As the bill progressed through the legislative process and moved to the House, the bill actually got worse.

- Limited bargaining rights for most state employees were restored but the Yeshiva language was introduced into the House version of SB 5 at the behest of the Inter-University Council.
- The senate version had eliminated arbitration and had no other dispute resolution procedure. The House version contained a sham dispute resolution procedure allows the governing body (public employer) to impose its own last offer to settle a contract dispute.
- Eliminated agency fee (fair share).
- The Senate version of the bill prohibited safety forces from negotiating over personal safety equipment. The House bill allowed for some negotiation of personal safety equipment but not over staffing which is a major safety issue for police and firefighters.

I have to say honestly, after the Senate Hearing, there was some talk that police and firefighters would be able cut their own deal. Remember that, in Wisconsin, Scott Walker left the safety forces out of his union-busting bill. We were also concerned when limited rights were restored to most state employees, because the Yeshiva language singled us out. As a relatively small group, with not much presence in the labor movement, we were definitely worried that we might get thrown under the bus by other unions.

The Yeshiva language has its origins with the IUC, which represents all of the University Presidents. In January the Executive Committee of the IUC sent a letter to the newly elected John Kasich calling for unspecified changes in several laws, one of them being ORC 4117, Ohio's collective bargaining law. By the time the Bill got to the House, it had the Yeshiva language in it, and it did not take us long to find out that the language was suggested by the IUC. Later, thanks to the work of Shelton Gelman, a law professor at Cleveland State, we learned that the General Counsel at Bowling Green State University drafted the Yeshiva language with the support of the then President of BGSU. This language was drafted because the AAUP had just won an election at BGSU, giving the full-time faculty the right to collective bargaining. Because the administration at BGSU could not win the election, they decided to get rid of collective bargaining by eliminating it for all faculty members in Ohio.

We also testified at the House hearing in March. We were third on the list of organizations and individuals requesting to testify at the House hearing. The Chair of the House Commerce and Labor Committee scheduled over 70 people to testify in one day. I arrived to testify at 9 a.m. Eventually, I did testify although it was at 2:30 a.m. the next day. Obviously, the strategy of the Republicans on the Committee was to try to force many of us to wait so long that we would just give up and not testify. Some people did leave, but I decided to stay and testify no matter how long it took. Knowing that the IUC was behind the Yeshiva language and having a copy of the testimony of the IUC President from the Senate Hearings, this time we concentrated on the impact of SB 5 on faculty, pointing out that the reason for rising costs at state universities was administrative bloat, not faculty salaries.

After testifying, I was asked to speak at a local rally in Dayton on April 4, and then four days later I spoke at a massive rally on the steps of the Capitol in Columbus. I mention these speeches to point out that if we want to be part of the conversation, we

need to seize the moment and at times get out of our comfort zone. Most of us are not used to standing up in front of 11,000 people and giving a rabble-rousing speech. But after that speech a lot more people knew about AAUP.

When the organization "We Are Ohio" was formed, two leadership bodies were created: 1) and Executive Committee and 2) Steering Committee. To be on the EC, a union needed to contribute at least \$1 million. For a seat on the Steering Committee, a union needed to contribute \$200,000. The big unions--AFSCME, SEIU, UFCW, and OEA--sat on the EC and they were joined by the smaller unions such as AAUP, the Ohio Nurses Association, FOP, and IAFF and some other smaller unions on the Steering Committee.

The Ohio Conference as an organization does not have that much in the way of reserves, and we are a 501C(3); so there are also limits on what we can give for lobbying. We asked the CBC Emergency Fund initially to make a contribution of \$100,000 and agreed to raise the other \$100,000 from our Chapters. Subsequently, the CBC gave another \$100,000, and chapters and individuals in Ohio as well as from across the country donated money. By the end of the campaign, the AAUP was responsible for raising nearly \$700,000, and we were actually invited to join the EC. The invitation to join the EC was in part based on the money we raised but also based on the number of signatures we collected and possibly the number of members we have mobilized to canvass and make phone calls. So one of the outcomes of our fight back against SB 5 is that we have as an organization established a statewide reputation as a union.

As I am speaking to you today, we are ahead in the polls. But none of us in leadership position have taken this to mean that we will win. Winning depends on voter turnout. I am sure that the vote-yes side (calling themselves "Build a Better Ohio"), which has been funded by the Koch brothers and other right-wing organizations, has outspent us on TV, but I am certain that we have knocked on more doors and called more people on the phone.

We have had a union at my school for 12 years. In that time, we have had our ups and downs in negotiations, but for the most part, the work of our union has been done by a handful of people. Until SB 5, our work was all done on campus, and we had no ties with the labor community. We just finished negotiating a contract with the axe of SB 5 hanging over our necks. It was not a great contract, and it

was not easy to get. Our previous contract expired June 30, 2011 and we just signed our new contract on October 12 after having started negotiations in January. For obvious reasons we were not in a good negotiating position.

However, as the saying goes, once they have seen the lights of the big city it is hard to get them back on the farm. So, too, it can be said that our members have seen what it means to be in a life and death struggle for our existence. Many of them attended rallies, collected signatures, canvassed and made phone calls. If we win on Nov. 8, I believe that our union--and I think this is true for all of the chapters--will be stronger than it was before the legislature passed SB 5.

All of us in labor, big and small, have agreed that we need to continue working together, which has not happened in the past. We need to continue working with the other unions to reverse the draconian budget cuts passed by Kasich and the legislature. We need to work together to repeal HB 194 Ohio's voter suppression bill. We need to fight privatization of state resources including our universities under the guise of an Enterprise University program. We need to work with the other unions to elect legislators and a governor who will not constantly be attacking us but will be looking out for the interest, the common interest, of most working Ohioans.

If we were ever in an ivory tower, or had the illusion that we were in an ivory tower, what the fight against SB 5 has taught us is that if we are going to survive and continue fighting for academic freedom, shared governance and a high quality education for all citizens, we must align ourselves with the labor movement and the broader movement for social justice or we will lose our capacity to fight for the common good.