



In his 2012 election speech, Governor Walker talked a lot about leadership; about standing shoulder to shoulder and arm to arm with each other; about having the courage to make tough decisions.

And when he spoke, he talked about the things that have made our state and our country great:

“What has made America amazing,” he said, “has been the fact that throughout our history—throughout the more than 200 years of our history—there have been men and women of courage who stood up and decided it was more important to look out for the future of their children and their grandchildren than their own political futures.”

I wish that everyone in this room could have that courage today: I wish you had the courage to stand up to special interest groups and your party bosses; I wish you had the courage not to steal from the wallets of Wisconsin workers; I wish you had the courage to listen to the hard working people of Wisconsin; I wish then that you had the courage to stand up and fight for them.

Because the simple fact is that this bill is nothing more than wage theft, and people are struggling to stay in the middle class, and maybe some of you aren't listening to the people and the workers of Wisconsin, but I hear them loud and clear:

Like Mark here in Madison whose dad's boss tried to fire him when he had a heart attack--his family would have lost everything but were protected by the union;

Or like Mitchell from Eau Claire who worked in a private sector union in Minnesota and is worried about government interfering in private enterprise;

Or like Michele, a small business owner in Fitchburg who believes having unions who advocate for paying her employees more is better for the economy, not worse;

Or Erv who tells me that because of this bill, upon graduating from UW Stevens Point, he'll be leaving the State of Wisconsin;

Or Sally all the way from Oshkosh, who wrote to me just to remind me that non millionaires are citizens, too.

These are the people—the workers—of Wisconsin. They are the fabric of our state: they're showing up to work every day; they're creating profits; they're building our economy; they're supporting their families; they're going to school, and they want to stay here.



But today, through this bill brought to you by Washington special interests, workers here in Wisconsin are going to be worse off: They'll be less safe, less insured, less trained, and less paid.

Does that sound like freedom to you? Do you want to talk about *freedom*?

Freedom in America means the freedom to take a sick day; the freedom to enjoy a weekend; the freedom to work an 8-hour day; the freedom to work in safe conditions; the freedom to have affordable health care; the freedom not to be fired without unjustly; the freedom to earn a family-supporting wage. Those are the freedoms that unions provide.

The only thing this bill provides is the freedom to freeload.

The verdict is in in Oklahoma, Indiana, and the 22 other states with wage theft laws. Poverty and unemployment in those states increased while wages decreased. They've lost jobs, they're ranking worse than fair-share states, and they're bleeding their middle class. This is what you're bringing to our special state.

So, I hope you won't sleep easy tomorrow knowing that you've robbed Wisconsin workers of the right to fair wages.

I hope you won't sleep easy tomorrow knowing that you've been bought and paid for by special interest groups, and that you're representing them today instead of hard working Wisconsin families.

And this bill will pass, and it'll be signed on Monday, and when it does, it will be in spite of the democratic process that's meant to be deliberative, thoughtful, and pragmatic, because you're not listening to the people of Wisconsin.

You're not listening to the people that you're supposed to be a voice for and represent.

At least we have had the courage to listen. At least we had courage to stand shoulder-to-shoulder and arm-in-arm with Wisconsin workers. At least we had the courage to decide it is more important to look out for our kids and grandkids, and not what's politically convenient and expedient.

And whatever happens today, this fight isn't over--we're going to keep fighting--and we'll hope that someday all of the people sitting in this room will have the courage that the people of Wisconsin deserve.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.