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### [When Will The Folks Paying the Bills Really Wake Up?](#)

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Some might say that the election of Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin, and the resulting fight against escalating costs, represents the first serious wake-up call for citizens paying the bill for public sector unionization. Maybe. I'm just wondering when more citizens across this country will wake up to these facts, outlined in this *Washington Examiner* column by Tad DeHaven:

For the private sector, the recession meant layoffs, pay cuts and reduced benefits. State and local employees felt nary a scratch. In fact, life is pretty good if your paycheck comes from the taxpayer.

In 2009, hourly compensation (wages plus benefits) for the average state and local government employee was 45 percent higher than the private-sector average. The share of state and local employees offered health care benefits was 88 percent versus 71 percent in the private sector.

For retirement benefits, it's 90 percent to 67 percent. State and local employees are also more likely to be offered life insurance (80 percent to 59 percent) and paid sick leave (89 percent to 67 percent).

Did I mention that defined-benefit pensions are offered to about 80 percent of state and local employees, versus 20 percent in the private sector? Or that they're typically twice as generous? That's kind of a problem because these pensions are underfunded by about \$3 trillion and state and local government finances are already in poor shape.

Last year, I wrote about [concerns of local officials here in North Carolina](#) about the potential impact of public sector unionization, should continuing efforts to overturn current state law be successful.