

Chicago Unions Form New Progressive Group

By: Connor D. Wolf
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Several unions and political organizations in Chicago are forming a group aimed at supporting progressive political candidates, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

The group, United Working Families, will consist of organizations like Chicago Teachers Union and Grassroots Illinois Action. An official announcement is expected early next week.

United Working Families executive director Kristen Crowell told the Chicago Sun-Times that the group “collectively will represent well over 100,000-plus members in a diverse range of communities in Chicago.”

Previously, Crowell was the executive director of We Are Wisconsin, which forced the recall election against Wisconsin Republican Gov. Scott Walker and was able to raise \$50 million to fight against his policies.

Walker survived the recall attempt.

“I think there is a real moment right now for change. When it comes to issues, what we’re seeing are two different Chicagos,” Crowell tells Chicago Sun-Times. “We are really concerned about the growing inequities facing our neighborhoods.”

One of the political targets of the group will be Chicago Democratic Mayor Rahm Emanuel, though United Working Families insists they are only trying to provide the people with alternatives to the mayor’s policies.

Emanuel sparred with unions when Chicago teachers went on strike.

The group was formed in part as a response to school closings in poor neighborhoods, high unemployment and extreme violence.

“I think these are issues right now that are central to what our community is paying attention to,” Crowell explains. “I think that it’s very important that United Working Families is a strong, independent voice for our residents.”

Though not formally associated, United Working Families has been in discussions with the Working Family Party, which promotes progressive policies and candidates in New York. The Chicago group will model some of their programs after Working Family Party, including community outreach and candidate training, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

Chris Edwards, the director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute, is skeptical the group will help the community.

Edwards told The Daily Caller News Foundation that such groups “serve few if any positive ends these days. Economically, they hurt workers, families, and industry by scaring away entrepreneurs and deterring investment.”

“And they harm individual freedom by squelching their freedom of association of workers,” he added. “Monopoly unions are also unfair to consumers and taxpayers.”

“Certainly, it is our opinion that the current leadership is not doing enough to take care of our folks,” Crowell told the Chicago Sun-Times “finding, recruiting and supporting candidates who are going to be with us.”