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The Arena

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Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

Did Scott Walker foes make a bad bet?

[Roger Pilon](#) | Vice President for Legal Affairs, Cato Institute :

We'll know soon enough whether foes of Scott Walker made a bad bet on the recall, but either way, Wisconsin made a bad bet years ago in initiating America's public-sector union movement.

The incentives thus established - with concentrated benefits for state employees and dispersed costs for taxpayers - have made it all too easy for politicians to cave in to union demands, resulting over time in government workers with benefits far exceeding anything a rational market would afford, or those who pay for the benefits (taxpayers) can afford. Not surprisingly, therefore, states with strong public-sector unions - California, Illinois, New York - are today in economic disarray.

Bad enough that *private*-sector unions make businesses less competitive, the remedy for which is moving to right-to-work states or abroad. States can't move. But their businesses and citizens can - and they do. Witness California over the past decade, and New York for several decades. Scott Walker has done us all a favor by crystallizing the issues facing so many states today.