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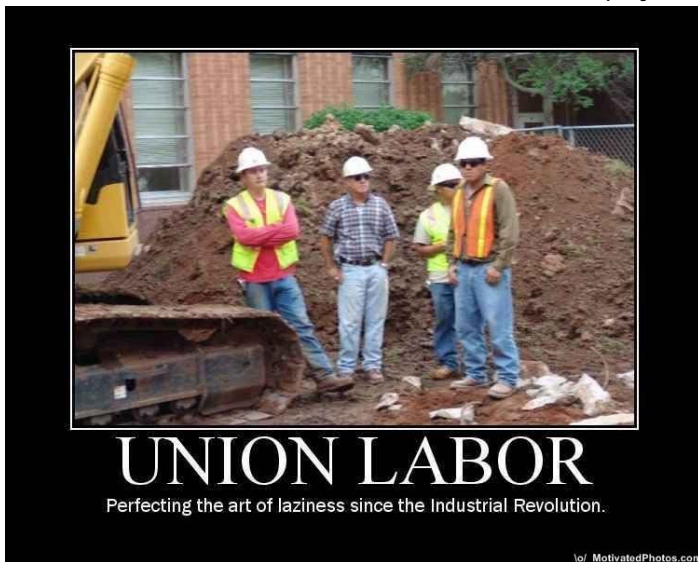
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Public-employee unionism: We can't afford it

Posted on March 30th, 2010 by stevemacoy



Municipalities from coast to coast have been watching Vallejo, Calif.'s, trip through bankruptcy court. The hope is Vallejo will shatter the bonds of extravagant public-employee benefits its leaders have bestowed in the past and taxpayers no longer can afford.

[Steven Greenhut](#) provides a succinct update in Monday's Wall Street Journal. (Note: If you google a few words from the portion of the column provided by this link, you'll be able to access a different link that brings up the whole thing without subscribing to the Journal's online service.) Money quote:

What they're finding is that even bankruptcy may not be enough to break the grip unions have on the public purse.

Sad. Perhaps others will embark on the Vallejo trail with a bit more fortitude.

Closer to home: reading about public-employee labor difficulties in Plymouth, we couldn't help but recall the line from "A League of Their Own" by scout Ernie Capadino after one of the players figures out the league's policy is to exclude unattractive women, even when they're good ballplayers. (He bursts out, "Look who just caught up!")

Members of Plymouth's finance board were trying to find a way to reduce labor costs at the town transfer station, only to discover they can't because of a contract provision guaranteeing the operator eight overtime hours every week. Stating the obvious, finance board Chairman Ralph Zovich opined:

When you allow them to dictate the hours, you have surrendered your management rights.

Indeed, "Look who just caught up!" Superseding or even assuming management prerogatives has been the public-employee unions' strategy ever since President Kennedy let this voracious bear out of its cage nearly 50 years ago.

The Capadino line applies just as well to Litchfield finance board member Jeffrey Zullo's advice to the Board of Education on Monday: "We're facing declining enrollment, so you are going to have to address the incremental (wage) escalation in your negotiations."

For a primer on where public-employee unionism is taking the country (mostly, down), visit the Cato Institute's Web site and read the latest update from the institute's tax-policy director, [Chris Edwards](#), on the damage public-employee unionism is doing.

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