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Working Families Seek to Block Implementation of Discriminatory Budget Repair Bill

WASHINGTON— SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin today joined the Wisconsin Education Association Council, Wisconsin State Employees Union, AFSCME District Councils 24, 40 and 48, AFT-Wisconsin, and the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO to file a lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin. The federal lawsuit challenges the **constitutionality of the state’s Budget Repair Bill, a measure that will gut collective bargaining rights for all public employees, carving out an exception to protect a small, select group of public workers who supported Governor Walker in the last election.**

“Working people around Wisconsin are saddened and disappointed that Wisconsin’s Republican-controlled legislature’s efforts to strip away workers’ basic rights to unite together to better serve our communities has gone unchecked,” said Dian Palmer, a State of Wisconsin public health nurse specializing in chronic diseases in minority populations and president of SEIU Healthcare Wisconsin

“Our lawsuit maintains that the Budget Repair Bill violates the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution by stripping away basic rights to bargain, organize and associate for the purpose of engaging in union and political activity, which have been in place for the last half century,” Palmer added.

It is a violation of the U.S. Constitution for a legislature to discriminate among classes of public employees, much less to reward political allies, while punishing political opponents. Scott Walker’s actions are purely political and it is distressing that the Wisconsin Supreme Court would allow public employees to be used as sacrificial lambs.

The lawsuit seeks to enjoin some, but not all, of the provisions of the Budget Repair Bill.

“Working and middle class families in Wisconsin have long been on the record accepting substantial economic cuts. In fact, we are not seeking to enjoin the significant pension and health insurance contribution requirements imposed by the Budget Repair Bill. However, we will not tolerate continued attacks on basic rights. We are committed to preserving our rights to bargain and freely associate,” Palmer concluded.

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