



The Western Kentucky Worker

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Prepared by Berry Craig, AFT Local 1360 and KEA-NEA
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Unions knew Williams was pro-right to work all along

Republican candidate for governor David Williams recently made the news when he said on a radio show that he favors a right to work law for Kentucky.

"That's not news to us," said Jeff Wiggins, council president. "We've known it all along."

The Kentucky State AFL-CIO has endorsed Gov. Steve Beshear, a Democrat, for re-election. Polls show him leading Williams, president of the Republican-majority state senate.

Wiggins said if Williams were elected, he would be another Scott Walker, Wisconsin's tea party-tilting, union-busting Republican governor.

"We don't want our state to be like Wisconsin," Wiggins said. "But if we are going to prevent that, we're going to have to put every bit of our resources on the street this election cycle."

He added: "Our people have to understand what's going on. We're going to have to show our people that Republicans like Williams don't want us to have labor unions. They want a two class system in this country – the very rich one percent and the poor. They don't want the middle class. They don't think we deserve anything." (See the article "SEN. DAVID WILLIAMS' ATTACKS ON KENTUCKY'S WORKERS")

Anti-union pols not welcome on Labor Day

Anti-union office holders and office seekers aren't welcome at this year's city Labor Day program.

"We are inviting friends of labor only," said Brandon Duncan, right, president of the Western Kentucky Labor Day Committee, the non-profit group that puts on Paducah's annual end-of-summer celebration.

Jeff Wiggins, council president and former Labor Day Committee president, endorsed the committee's decision.

The program starts with a parade down Broadway starting at 9:30 a.m. Labor Day. The procession will be followed by political speaking, a picnic and other activities at the riverfront.



Sanders is 'superior' says the Kentucky Housing Corporation

The W.B. Sanders Retirement Center has earned a coveted superior rating from the Kentucky Housing Corporation.

"Superior is the highest rating any property can receive," said Linda Williams, Jackson House-Sanders Center occupancy specialist. The inspection was conducted May 12. "Kentucky Housing Corporation observed zero findings," she added.

"The superior rating is an accomplishment that has not been reached in many years," said Benny Adair, president of the Jackson House-Sanders Center Board of Directors.

"Congratulations to Phyllis Rouse and the staff for all their hard work. We have reached another goal. Now we must continue to offer the



best service and remain a superior retirement center.” Rouse, right, and the staff were recently honored at a dinner at Martin Fiero restaurant in Paducah.

SEN. DAVID WILLIAMS’ ATTACK ON KENTUCKY’S WORKERS

June 7, 2011: Williams Called Himself “Very Much An Admirer” Of Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker Due To His Action On Unions. During an interview with Bill Bennett on the radio show *Morning In America*, Williams expressed support for Scott Walker, saying: “I don’t know Scott Walker as well but I tell ya, he lives in a state where the law and the labor policy and the public employee policy was so bad that he had to do dramatic things. Sometimes you just can’t wait, so I’m very much an admirer of his.”[*Morning in America* interview, 6/7/11, [~4:11](#)]

June 7, 2011: Williams Talked About Making Kentucky “Right To Work,” Touted His Plan To End Pensions For State Workers and Lamented Union Influence In Kentucky. During an interview with Bill Bennett on the radio show *Morning in America*, Williams said: “We’re not a right to work state and the states to the south are and that’s a tremendous disadvantage for us. We have a public employee pension problem that defines benefit plans instead of defines contribution plans. Over the last three years as president of the senate I’ve tried to change that from a def -- to a defined contribution plan for our new employees so that we might be able to stabilize our situation. We have a huge unfunded liability. When the stock market went down, taxpayers in Kentucky assumed a huge unfunded liability. So those are the issues that we have in the state. We have a house that’s controlled by kind of the liberal wing of the Democrat party in the state. Unions have a disproportionate influence in Kentucky compared to their actual” influence. [*Morning in America* interview, 6/7/11, [~3:35](#)]

June 1, 2011: Williams Said He Would Make Kentucky A “Right To Work” State. During an interview with Tim Farley, an host of XM radio show POTUS, Williams said he would change laws to make Kentucky a “right to work” state. The exchange went as follows: HOST: “You mentioned Kentucky is not a right to work state. Is that something you would seek to change as governor?” WILLIAMS: “You know, this is an issue that has never been even championed by the Chamber of Commerce in the state of Kentucky. We have a very low percentage of labor population in the state and even many of the people in the local unions who talk to me realize that we’re at a disadvantage among southern states in particular. Even Virginia, as you know, has a right to work. Tennessee, other states to the south all have become right to work states. It’s going to take a lot of education. I personally favor that.” [POTUS interview, uploaded 6/6/11, [~6:06](#)]

June 1, 2011: Williams Said He Would Need Help “To Take On The Big Unions Across The Country.”In his response to a question about making Kentucky a “right to work” state, Williams added he will need help battling unions nationwide. He said:” Whether or not that’s gonna be at the top of my agenda as we attack the other issues we have as far as our unfunded liability – you know, it takes some heavy lifting to take on the big unions across the country and I’m gonna have to incorporate some help for public education purposes on a myriad of issues and that’s one of them.” [POTUS interview, uploaded 6/6/11, [~6:46](#)]

April 2011: Williams Called Teachers Union “Damaging,” Agreed With Limits On Collective Bargaining Rights And Said Union Rights Should Not “Advance In Kentucky.” Asked about unions in the state of Kentucky, Williams noted that Kentucky doesn’t have a public employee union and said: “The closest thing to being organized and probably the most damaging organization that we have in Kentucky is the Jefferson County Teachers Association that is a highly organized teacher’s union that in my opinion makes political opinion that do not even reflect the beliefs of their members.” He continued that he agreed collective bargaining rights of unions should be limited and added: “I do not want to see the situation advance in Kentucky

where public employees can strike or whether they will make other sorts interventions that I think are inappropriate and I will monitor that very closely.” [Legacy forum, 4/26/11, [~2:34](#)]

February 2011: Senate Approved Williams’ Plan To End Guaranteed Pensions For New State Hires. In February 2011, the *Herald Leader* reported, “The state Senate passed a controversial bill on Friday that would end guaranteed pensions for new state and local government employees in order to resolve the public pension funds’ growing liability. Kentucky needs to stay ahead of the multi-billion-dollar pension liability problem that is forcing tax hikes and painful spending reductions in other states, said Republican senators backing the bill.” The report continued: “‘We’re in a hole, but we’re gonna stop digging it any deeper than it is. We have a plan,’ Williams told the Senate State and Local Government Committee, which met to approve the bill before the full Senate vote.” [*Herald Leader*, [2/11/11](#)]

- **Report: Williams “Tried To End State Pensions For New Hires.”** Reporting on controversy over Wisconsin’s law to limit the rights of unions to bargain collectively, the *Herald Leader* reported in February 2011, “...Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville, has tried to end state pensions for new hires...” [Herald Leader, [2/26/11](#)]

2006: Williams Backed Fletcher’s “Right To Work” Proposal. In January 2006, the *Courier Journal* reported: “Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville, said he personally supports the measure, but he acknowledged that some GOP lawmakers with union ties would oppose it. Williams said Kentucky is having a hard time competing with the other Southern states that have ‘right to work’ laws. He said the policy is pro-worker. ‘People shouldn’t be forced to pay dues to an organization that they don’t belong to,’ said Williams, who said he has never belonged to a union but also has never crossed a picket line.” [*Courier Journal*, 1/7/06]

2001: Williams Didn’t Want Patton to Issue Executive Order Allowing State Workers to Unionize. According to the *Herald-Leader*, “Gov. Paul Patton is considering issuing an executive order to allow state workers to unionize if they choose. ...Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville, said last night that he heard a few weeks ago that Patton is considering a possible order. But Williams said, ‘I don’t believe he will do that. I believe he will exercise better judgment. This is a matter of important public policy. If he does something like this, that only would verify what we have been saying about the dangers of these executive orders, their misuse to change the law,’ he said. ‘That would be a dangerous trend and it would not be well received as an intervention in the legislative arena,’ Williams said. If Patton takes such action, the state legislature could rescind it in the 2002 General Assembly or it could face a legal challenge, Williams said.” [*Herald-Leader*, 3/21/01]

Minutes of the June 2, 2011, Western Kentucky AFL-CIO Area Council Meeting Compiled by Berry Craig, recording secretary

President Jeff Wiggins gavelled the executive board meeting to order at 6:15 p.m., there being a quorum present.

He reviewed the correspondence, including a fax with the current national AFL-CIO COPE scores of members of Congress. Sen. Mitch McConnell and Rep. Ed Whitfield are among the lawmakers with the poorest union voting records.

In other business:

Wiggins said State Farm Insurance has agreed to pay \$7,442.76 for storm damage to the roof and siding of the council hall.

Wiggins said a claim also will be filed to repair the damaged council flag pole.

Vice President Benny Adair sought support for the Labor-Management Committee.

Financial Secretary-Treasurer Brandon Duncan agreed to take over and try to make the committee active.

Duncan, who is also president of the Western Kentucky Labor Day Committee, briefed the board on plans for this year’s Labor Day program, including a beer garden and a raffle. The committee will again purchase advertising on Comcast Cable TV. Only pro-union politicians will be invited to speak and march in the parade. Hardy Williams and Larry Johnson have been

nominated for grand marshal.

COPE Chairman Howard "Bubba" Dawes announced that Finis Hundley of the UAW is planning to run for the state legislature as a Democrat in the district that includes Elizabethtown, where he lives.

Ron Spann thanked the council for naming him the 2011 W.C. Young Award recipient.

Sergeant at Arms David Burnett expressed concern about how he is being mistreated by the county road department management and Judge-Executive Van Newberry. Burnett asked delegates who know Newberry to contact him on his behalf.

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Wiggins gavelled the regular meeting into session at 7 p.m. Following the customary Pledge of Allegiance and prayer, Wiggins again reviewed the correspondence, including the COPE scores, which generated considerable discussion among the delegates.

Duncan read the monthly financial report. The executive board report was read, but delegates waived reading of the minutes from the May meeting.

The rest of the agenda followed the executive board meeting. Wiggins, a former Labor Day Committee present, agreed with the committee's plan to invite just labor-friendly just politicians to the parade and picnic. "I wanted to say if you're not supporting labor, keep your butt off my platform and out of my parade," Wiggins said.

In other business, Wiggins announced that plans are being finalized for the W.C. Young dinner at Skillet's Restaurant in La Center. The dinner probably will be in July.

In addition, Adair, president of the Jackson House-Sanders Retirement Center Board of Directors announced that UFCW workers had agreed to a contract at both properties. He also said the Sanders Center had received a coveted "superior rating" from HUD and that a celebration dinner would be held.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Hillbilly Report sees a scandal brewing over Ed Whitfield's address

The ancient Greeks considered "hubris" -- excessive pride -- a big-time sin. The Good Book warns us that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."

Jim Pence, who runs the Hillbilly Report blog in Kentucky, says U.S. Rep. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., doesn't really live where he says he does and might be guilty of voter fraud. Check out: <http://www.hillbillyreport.org/diary/2976/congressman-ed-whitfield-rky-a-scandal-waiting-for-the-media-to-pick-it-up>. Pence hopes the national media will take a gander at his story and investigate Whitfield.

Solidarity with CWA Local 6300

Members of Paducah unions recently joined an informational picket line in support of local members of St. Louis-based CWA Local 6300 who work at Multiband in Paducah.

"Our members provide installation and repair services for DIRECTV satellite," said Local 6300 Chief Steward Michael Barban. "Our fellow union brothers and sisters are presently working without a contract during these challenging times. Although bargaining is ongoing and the climate of negotiations is tough with every issue, we must maintain our fight for workers' justice and rights."

Several motorists honked their horns in and waved in support of the workers, who stood on the sidewalk on U.S. 60 in front of Noble Park.



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