

## **Solidarity With Wisconsin Rally February 24, 2011**

### **Comments of Catherine G. Scott, President, AFSCME District Council 47**

We are here today to support our Union brothers and sisters in Wisconsin, the birthplace of AFSCME, and Indiana, Ohio and other states where the very right for public employees to have a Union to collectively bargain on their behalf is being challenged. Is Governor Walker admitting that he is so incompetent at collective bargaining that he has to strip public employees of their right to do so? Is this the same as if you can't win fairly you have to cheat?

But we have to ask another question. How did librarians, social workers, recreation leaders, biologist who keep your water safe, chemist and engineers who keep your air clean and your bridges safe, as well as all public employees, become Public Enemy #1?

The fights that are going on right now have very little to do with balancing budgets and everything to do with a shift of money and power to corporations and away from poor and working people. Make no mistake about it. These attacks are a diversion to keep the country from looking at the real budget busters - 2 endless wars which cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

Right here in Pennsylvania, to fill a budget deficit the legislature is more interested in decreasing services like education and Adult Basic Healthcare and attacking pension plans than taxing large gas corporations which will make billions extracting natural gas from the Marcellus Shale.

We say stop attacking working people and the poor. Make everyone pay their fair share. We say treat all workers with respect including public employees.

In Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, New Jersey and right here in Philadelphia we say Respect Collective Bargaining.

We will fight to keep our rights to have a Union so that we can have a voice in the workplace and ensure economic justice for all.