

H A R L A N   R I C H A R D S

May 16, 2012

Get Out of the Way:  
Governor Scott Walker  
Swears to Govern Impartially

Get it out of the way, right away,  
Tell that first lie  
When you're sworn in at your inauguration.  
That way, it's out of the way,  
No agonizing over broken promises,  
Having to do the right thing,  
Worrying about those thousands of people  
You are going to condemn to  
Poverty & misery, lacking health care,  
A place to stay or food for their kids.  
Build some more prisons,  
Open up some poor houses,  
Do the right thing, the Republican thing,  
And get that first lie out of the way, right away.

Written January 4, 2011 by Harlan Richards

I wrote this poem when Scott Walker was getting sworn in. I was pretty sure that he had an agenda and was going to do whatever he felt was necessary to further that agenda. The media reported recently on a videotape that surfaced which was taken back when Walker was seeking election. He was speaking to a billionaire - one of Wisconsin's homegrown ones - and told her of his plans to break the unions in a "divide and conquer" strategy that would turn Wisconsin into a right-to-work state. I hope I have the facts correct on this. I haven't seen the video or read any newspaper articles about it.

During the swear-in, Scott Walker promised to govern impartially. It was part of the oath of office. It turns out that he must have had his fingers crossed when he made that oath. My predictions in the above poem have for the most part turned out to be true. Walker didn't build more prisons but he did stop prisoners from being paroled and repealed the early release statutes for truth in sentencing prisoners. He took health care away from poor people and even though he didn't build any poor houses he made it possible for many Wisconsin citizens to become (or remain) homeless.

Getting back to the video, I heard Walker's exact words (on public radio) as he told Diane Hendricks (billionaire owner of ABC roofing and Walker's biggest donor at \$510,000) that he planned to turn Wisconsin into a "red state" with a "divide and conquer" strategy. He planned to start with outlawing public employee unions followed by making Wisconsin a right-to-work state, i.e., abolishing union shops which would for all intents and purposes end unions in Wisconsin. The video was part of a documentary being filmed (in Beloit, I think) and the film maker promised to keep the video confidential for one year.

At the recent Republican state convention Walker stated he had "no interest in pursuing" right-to-work legislation. Based on his past track record, this can be read to mean that he still wants to turn Wisconsin into a right-to-work state but realizes that he won't be successful if he tries at this point in time. Rest assured, if he survives the recall and gets a majority back in the senate, he will eagerly sign any bill the legislature sends him abolishing worker rights.

For those of you who don't like unions, just remember, if not for unions we would not have an 8-hour work day, 40 hour week (with mandatory time and a half for overtime), OSHA and all the other laws protecting workers and restricting child labor.

Just so you know, I'm not impartial. Walker is the reason I am stuck in Stanley where I am experiencing the worst prison conditions in almost 20 years. On Jan. 7, 2011, 3 days after Walker was sworn in, the parole commission increased the length of my parole deferral and my security level was elevated based on the parole denial. I spent 3 weeks in the county jail and was then sent to Stanley. It was part of Walker's tough-on-crime mandate and I was one of his first victims. When I should have been released on parole after spending years in minimum security, at work release centers, on work release and driving a state van tens of thousands of miles all over northwestern Wisconsin, instead I was sent back to prison.

Will the new governor have the courage to undo the damage Walker has done? Will I finally be paroled over 27 years after stabbing another man in a fight? And will all the other old men and women languishing in Wisconsin prisons for decades finally be released?

We'll know after the election in June.

mfgt

Great to hear from you.

This is an exciting time for me. With the recall election coming up, if Walker loses I can probably get back to work release and maybe even get released on parole.

When my blogs are posted, is there a date showing when they are made available? I usually date my blogs on the day I write them or sometimes post-date them so they are dated on the day they arrive at between the bars. I wonder how long it takes btw to put them on my blog? I wonder if they just post them or screen them for appropriateness?

Anyway, thanks for your help. My gratitude knows no bounds:)

Written May 16, 2012