



Faced with growing budget deficits and restive taxpayers, elected officials from Maine to Alabama, Ohio to Arizona, are pushing new legislation to limit the power of labor unions, particularly those representing government workers, in collective bargaining and politics.

State officials from both parties are wrestling with ways to curb the salaries and pensions of government employees, which typically make up a significant percentage of state budgets. On Wednesday, for example, New York's new Democratic governor, Andrew M. Cuomo, is expected to call for a one-year salary freeze for state workers, a move that would save \$200 million to \$400 million and challenge labor's traditional clout in Albany.

But in some cases — mostly in states with Republican governors and Republican statehouse majorities — officials are seeking more far-reaching, structural changes that would weaken the bargaining power and political influence of unions, including private sector ones.

For example, Republican lawmakers in Indiana, Maine, Missouri and seven other states plan to introduce legislation that would bar private sector unions from forcing workers they represent to pay dues or fees, reducing the flow of funds into union treasuries. In Ohio, the new Republican governor, following the precedent of many other states, wants to ban strikes by public school teachers.

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TVNL Comment: The destruction of labor unions started with Reagan and will end with the return of right wing corporate power. Working people will take the blame for the crimes of the corporate institutions that stole us blind.