



# ACE

## ASSOCIATION OF CAREER EMPLOYEES

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Dear Editor:

The Association of Career Employees (ACE) has served as a voice for civil service employees for nearly 30 years. ACE is not a union but works to insulate the civil service from political involvement in retaining and compensating employees.

The Wisconsin civil service system celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> year in 2005 and has a long tradition of improvement and modification following processes involving discussion and participation by all three branches of government and comment from the public. Union representation of state employees has developed alongside the civil service and played an important role in its history. While civil service provides citizens with equal access to state jobs and insulates employees from politically motivated hiring and job loss, union representation allows employees to collectively negotiate for fair compensation, working conditions and due process.

In his recent budget adjustment bill, Scott Walker claims to leave the civil service structure intact, but the scope of impact on civil service principles and processes is breath-taking. It affects state, municipal, county, and school district employees. The proposal includes major decreases in compensation along with the elimination of bargaining rights for everything except limited wage increases. The rush to push this proposal through the state legislative committees and the full assembly and senate within one week provides no real chance for discussion or analysis of the long-term impact, which goes far beyond dealing with a short-term budget deficit.

The claim for leaving civil service intact is also made suspect by the removal of positions such as chief legal counsel from the civil service. It is not wise to allow legal advice to be colored by partisan considerations. Other positions were removed as well further diluting the positive impact of the civil service tradition.

ACE urges the legislature to provide a slower process that allows for greater public involvement in such a far-reaching plan. The proposal will not only hurt public employees, but will also have a negative impact on private businesses that service this population and on long-term tax collection needed to continue public services.

Sincerely,

Sally Drew  
President