

February 25, 2011

The Milwaukee Archdiocese Priests Alliance hereby endorses without qualification Archbishop Jerome Listecki's recently issued "Statement Regarding the Rights of Workers and the Value of Unions" (accessible at www.chnonline.org)¹.

The Archbishop's statement clearly reiterates the long standing conviction of Catholic Social Teaching that effective labor unions enable women and men to have a voice in important aspects of their employment. These include protecting their access to safe working conditions, a living wage, and security in times of disability and unemployment.

While we recognize and urge all citizens to acknowledge the difficult and challenging fiscal realities facing the State of Wisconsin today, we must at the same time insist that trying economic conditions cannot be viewed as justifying the denial of workers' access to effective union representation and participation.

Since the unions have offered to make the financial concessions asked for by Gov. Walker, we call upon the Governor to remove the provisions in the budget repair bill which would strip unions of their collective bargaining rights.

Public employees are our parishioners and neighbors. They are also tax-paying citizens who provide essential services to our community. Like every other worker, their human rights --including the right to a living wage and effective union representation --must be respected.

These are principles upon which all people of goodwill can agree, regardless of our political affiliation or how we voted in the last election.

Board of the Milwaukee Archdiocese Priests Alliance