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## Reclaim Wisconsin, Recall Walker

Here are two steps you can take **now** to help recall Gov. Walker:

### #1 – Sign Both Petitions

There are two separate petitions to sign – one to recall Gov. Walker and the other to recall Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch. If Mr. Walker is recalled, Ms. Kleefisch would automatically become governor – unless she is also recalled.

Many of our union's leaders are already circulating recall petitions. Please check with your school's EA Chairperson.

You can also sign the petitions at the MTEA Building, weekdays from 2:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.

**#2 – Circulate Recall Petitions Training** - It's very important to receive training on the legal requirements for gathering recall petition signatures. You may stop by our union office at 5130 West Vliet Street on weekdays from 2:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. to receive this training and pick up petition forms the same day.

This is a Wisconsin Statute 11.29 communication for MTEA members only.

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## Take the PHA Now or Pay Later

The deadline for completing your annual personal health assessment (PHA) online is **December 15**. If you and your spouse do not take the PHA by the deadline, a \$100 deduction will be taken from your February 17 and March 16 paychecks - a total of \$200.

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## What "Walkerworld" Looks Like

Last spring, Gov. Walker and his Republican majorities in the State Senate and Assembly enacted a new public employee bargaining law, Act 10, and adopted a two-year state budget. **Gov. Walker's agenda:**

◆ **Prohibits collective bargaining** between public employee unions and governmental employers.

Gov. Walker's law went into effect on July 1, 2011. Our union and the school board are now forbidden from bargaining anything (except base wage amounts).

◆ **Eliminates existing contracts** effective upon their expiration.

For EA's, the 2009-12 contract is gone on July 1, 2012.

◆ **Cuts state funding** for public education - an alarming, unprecedented amount for this school year and next.

MPS lost \$82 million in state funding for the 2011-12 budget year - resulting in massive cuts in positions, larger class sizes, layoffs, security/discipline problems, etc.

◆ **Substantially expands vouchers.**

The changes have already accelerated the loss of students, decreased funding to MPS, and increased city property taxes.

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## Extreme Use of Gov. Walker's Tools

Faced with massive funding cuts and significant losses in enrollment, the School Board has voted to start using the cost-cutting "tools" Gov. Walker claims will solve all budget problems. At its November 17 meeting, the Board approved drastic changes in health insurance and other benefits that will harm active and retired employees and their families.

For example, after the EA contract expires on June 30, 2012, the maximum you could pay for out-of-pocket deductibles and coinsurance amounts will skyrocket to \$9,750 a year. (By contract, the annual cap is now \$825.) The 10-fold increase would apply to in-network medical services for a member with PPO family coverage.

### Delay Needed to Develop Alternatives

Along with other MPS unions, MTEA leaders asked the administration and the Board's finance committee to postpone action on the health/benefit changes recommended by the superintendent. There will be pain, but we'd like to lessen it, if possible.

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### **Why a PHA Every Year?**

The PHA provides confidential information about your health status including risks. The results will include suggestions for totally voluntary health education/wellness programs, specifically for you.

**Quick PHA Access** - Go to mtea.org and click on the "Take the PHA" quick link.

**Important Reminders** - Be sure to hit "Send," and then for your records, print out the **confirmation number**.

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## **Great Start on Recall Signatures**

The Recall Walker petition drive is off and running! United Wisconsin, the group coordinating recall actions statewide, reported that over 300,000 signatures were collected in the first 12 days. The 60-day period for circulating recall petitions started November 15.

### **But Don't Relax**

Supporters of Gov. Walker have deep pockets and will spare no expense in challenging the signatures. The goal is at least 750,000 signatures, anticipating legal battles over their validity.

We have lots to do in the next six weeks - in the midst of the holidays.

### **Help Circulate Saturday!**

MTEA members are invited to join with We Are Wisconsin in obtaining signatures on Saturday morning, December 3. Please come to our union office at 5130 West Vliet Street between 9:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Participants will go in teams to various spots in Milwaukee County to gather signatures for about two hours.

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We asked the district for information our actuary needs to develop alternative changes to the group health insurance. MPS plans to give us the data on December 9.

If the School Board agrees to reconsider the health benefit changes it approved two weeks ago, we will have a reasonable opportunity to present alternatives. We are developing actuarially sound measures which will address MPS finance issues, but lessen the harm to employees, retirees, and their families.

### **Ask Board Members to Reconsider**

Please contact the Board member in your district and ask for a delay until January. Details are at mtea.org including:

- ◆ Talking points for communicating with Board members.
  - ◆ More examples of the extreme changes in health/benefits approved at the Board's November 17 meeting.
  - ◆ Remarks by MTEA President Bob Peterson, explaining why partnering now is critical to the future of MPS.
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### **Phone Bank This Thursday**

In an effort to assist members in contacting their Board representatives, we will make phone calls after school on Thursday, December 1, from 3:30 - 8:00 p.m. These member-to-member personal contacts will stress the importance of reaching out to Board members **now**.

Please stop by and stay as long as you can. You'll receive detailed instructions and nourishment.

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### **Plus a Salary Freeze and Furlough Days**

The Board also voted to freeze salaries and impose four unpaid furlough days for the next three budget years. These significant, far-reaching steps were taken with **no** prior notice, **no** opportunity for community input.

### **Focus Must Be on Health/Benefit Changes**

The Board's action to freeze salaries and mandate unpaid furlough days was surprising and swift - with no debate. However, it's essential at this time to focus the Board's attention on considering alternatives to health insurance/benefits. Reconsidering a salary freeze does not require the technical data and complicated steps necessary to change the Board's decision on health/benefits.

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## **Paraprofessional Vacancies Open to Transfer**

If you want to transfer to a para position at another school, you should check for vacancy postings on the MPS portal. Vacancies, along with the number of hours and brief description of duties, are posted often. You access the information through "Employee Self Service" and submit your application online.

MPS is hiring new employees for positions not filled through transfers.