

families are burdened by new attacks on their rights.

About a month and a half ago, at a roundtable held in an Episcopal church on the statehouse square in Columbus, I was listening to nurses, teachers, police officers, and other public employees. I had heard from conservative politicians who wanted to cut off collective bargaining rights, to take those rights away, and those people making accusations that these firefighters and police officers and teachers were lazy, overpaid, had too much time off, had pensions that were too big, had health care benefits that were too generous. But as I was hearing all that from critics, I was listening one on one to these public employees.

A young teacher, who had been teaching only about 10 years, told me that when she goes to the bargaining table, she doesn't just talk about wages and benefits but that she is negotiating for smaller class sizes as well. A police officer I talked to wasn't just talking about pensions and pay, he was negotiating for a bulletproof vest for him and his men and women colleagues who were also police officers.

So these negotiations are not just for more money, more public dollars spent on behalf of these police, firefighters, teachers, and nurses; they are also about helping society, improving society, expanding on the middle class.

It is clear those attacking collective bargaining are more interested in taking rights away than creating jobs. It is clear in Ohio. The bill that passed the House of Representatives would give Ohio the most restrictive voter regulation laws in the Nation that they would seek to limit our basic freedoms—restrict worker rights, restrict the right to vote, cut back on women's rights. Perhaps I am missing something, but how does that have anything to do with creating jobs and strengthening our economy?

Let me, for a couple of moments, put a human face on all of this.

I have a friend who is a firefighter named George, in Willoughby, OH. He wrote me this letter right after the Governor signed this legislation taking away his rights, taking away bargaining rights for a huge number of police officers and firefighters and teachers and health care workers and nurses and others. He said:

I joined my proud profession knowing I would never be rich. I truly joined knowing I would be helping people. I joined knowing I would be able to raise a family. I joined knowing I would have a pension in the end.

As a 21-year-old kid entering this profession, I weighed heavily on the "helping people" and the pure excitement of the job. Now, as a 41-year-old firefighter who has been beaten down both physically and emotionally, I will admit my pension now plays a role, is my driving force to go to work every day.

I have always been the firefighter who the bosses look to when a task needs doing.

I will soon be a 42-year-old firefighter in my 21st year of service. I am virtually 6.5 years from being able to retire. This job has torn up my knees, requiring surgery to one of them.

This job has injured my back on several occasions, twice requiring extensive time off to rehab. I am doing everything possible to avoid surgery.

This job has caused memories that will stick with me for the rest of my life, the kind of memories that make you go home and hug your wife and kids and thank God that they are safe.

I mention all this because, as you know, we as public servants are being attacked in Ohio. We are being attacked in our profession as well as our retirement. Our fundamental rights and the foundation of our profession are being attacked. Collective bargaining is the only way we have been able to improve safety as well as maintain a quality of life for our families. This system protects both the taxpayer and the public servant from leaders on both sides who choose to rule with an iron fist.

I am now one of our beat-up senior firefighters who is rapidly approaching retirement age. Where do threats of pension changes leave me or the many others like me if I am unable to finish my years of service due to injury? Where do those threats of pension changes leave me if my employer decides it is "fiscally responsible" to lay off higher-paid beat-up senior firefighters to keep lower-paid younger fighters?

I will get back to the letter in a second, but my understanding is, under the legislation that Governor Kasich signed, management, then, would be able to say: This firefighter is more likely to get hurt. He is older and gets paid more, so we will lay off five of them in their forties and keep the younger ones. It is just too bad they are not going to have enough years to retire.

That is what taking away collective bargaining rights, that is what busting the union for these firefighters or police officers or teachers or nurses can do.

Back to the letter:

In Willoughby, due to economic conditions, we have not replaced firefighters who have died or retired. In 1990 we ran 2,100 incidents per year. In 2010 we ran just under 5,000 incidents.

In 20 years it went from 2,100 runs to 5,000 runs.

I am sure we are not the only city that continues to operate understaffed with higher volumes.

I consider myself a moderate when it comes to politics. I have always voted for those who support me as a public servant. That is what true public servants do.

That was George, a firefighter in Lake County, OH, in Willoughby, just east of Cleveland.

Again, this is not just about collective bargaining. It is what we want our country to be. Dr. King, whom we honor, who was assassinated 43 years ago today—Dr. King delivered the 1965 commencement address at Antioch College, in Yellow Springs, OH, where Coretta Scott attended many years before. On the moral question of confronting poverty, Dr. King said:

There is no deficit in human resources. The deficit is in human will.

Yes, we all care about budget deficits. We know we need to move toward a balanced budget. We know our first focus needs to be creating jobs. We

want to invest smartly and cut wisely, but we also care about the education deficit. We care about the infrastructure deficit. We care about disparities in education and health care based on class and race and gender. We care about the lack of economic mobility for millions of Americans in underserved urban areas and underserved rural Appalachian areas, like much of the Presiding Officer's State which borders an underserved rural area in my State. We care about these deficits in our Nation. But what is greater is our deficit in the lack of will to close them.

The question becomes, then, Do we have the will to do what is right? Do we have the will to fight back in Ohio when the Governor and legislature have eliminated collective bargaining, now effective in 90 days? Do we have the will to fight for the middle class? Do we have the will to strengthen our country as we cut the budget to move toward a balanced budget but not cut what matters for a productive, strong middle class, for middle-class Americans, and for all those people in Ohio and West Virginia and around this country who aspire to join the middle class?

I yield the floor.

#### ROCKCASTLE HIGH SCHOOL LADY ROCKETS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to recognize the remarkable accomplishments of one of Kentucky's most impressive athletic teams, the Rockcastle High School Lady Rockets basketball team. This March 12, the Lady Rockets triumphed over the DuPont Manual Lady Crimsons in overtime, 62 to 60, to win the school's first Kentucky High School Athletic Association Sweet 16 girls basketball championship.

It has been an unforgettable season for the Lady Rockets, who finished the year 36-1, on a 27-game winning streak, and undefeated by any fellow Kentucky team. They entered the final tournament game knowing they faced an experienced and competitive opponent, but that their raw talent and determination would show the people of the Bluegrass State that they had something to prove. Well, prove something they did: After clawing their way back from a nine-point deficit to tie it and send the game into overtime, the Lady Rockets never trailed during the extra minutes.

Senior Sara Hammond, named the tournament's Most Valuable Player, the State's first McDonald's All American, and Kentucky's Miss Basketball 2011, posted 26 points and 11 rebounds during the game. It all came down to the final seconds of overtime when Lady Rockets head coach Chrysti Noble decided not to call a time out and trusted her players to finish the game with the right shot. Senior Angie Lawrence took a buzzer-beating jumper to give the Lady Rockets the title.

Streamers and confetti hailed from the rafters, blanketing the team and the record number of 5,122 screaming spectators at E.A. Diddle Arena in Bowling Green, KY.

Their victory was the first championship title for coach Chrysti Noble in her 21 seasons at Rockcastle High School. It also made the Lady Rockets the first team not from Lexington or Louisville to win the girls' basketball State championship in more than a decade.

The students and faculty of Rockcastle High School, the community of Mount Vernon and the entire Commonwealth couldn't be more proud of this talented, winning team. The Sunday after winning the championship, the equivalent of one-fifth of the population of Mount Vernon turned out to wish the Lady Rockets well as the team members rode through town atop three fire engines, a convoy of honking vehicles and jubilant fans following behind. Their hard work, dedication and respect for one another undoubtedly makes them a team that will be remembered for years to come.

Mr. President, the Louisville Courier-Journal recently published an article about the Rockcastle High School Lady Rockets' history-making season and what the championship meant to the team, the school and the Commonwealth. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Courier-Journal, Mar. 13, 2011]

**GIRLS' SWEET 16 ROCKCASTLE COUNTY BEATS MANUAL 62-60 FOR TITLE ON LAST-SECOND SHOT**

(By Jason Frakes)

BOWLING GREEN, KY—The knock all season on the Rockcastle County High School girls' basketball team was that it's a one-woman squad, led by McDonald's All American Sara Hammond.

The Lady Rockets now have a state championship trophy to prove that never was the case.

Angie Lawrence nailed a jumper in the lane with 1 second left in overtime to give Rockcastle County a 62-60 victory over Manual in the final of the Houchens/KHSAA Sweet 16.

A state final-record crowd of 5,122 at E.A. Diddle Arena saw Rockcastle County capture its first state championship and end a 10-year reign of title winners from either Louisville or Lexington. West Carter (2000) was the last school not from either of Kentucky's largest cities to win the crown.

"This is the best feeling ever," said Hammond, a University of Louisville signee who was named the Sweet 16 MVP. "I knew we were going to get it done tonight."

The 6-foot-2 Hammond posted 26 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Lady Rockets (36-1), who finished the season with a 27-game winning streak and lost only to Mount Juliet (Tenn.) 60-47 on Dec. 30.

Lawrence, a 5-5 senior who has signed with Georgetown College, added 18 points.

LeAsia Wright had 19 points and Kara Wright 12 for Manual (33-5), which was No. 1 in the state in The Courier-Journal's Litkenhous Ratings all season.

"Our best wasn't good enough to win the game, but it's good enough for me," Lady

Crimsons coach Stacy Pendleton said. "They just beat us. We played as hard as we could."

Manual led 37-28 early in the third quarter, but Rockcastle County charged back and eventually tied it at 47 on a Lawrence three-pointer with 5:07 left in the fourth.

Hammond scored 19 points in the first half, but it was Lawrence who carried the Lady Rockets late with 15 points after the break.

"Their other kids really stepped up in the second half," Pendleton said. "But if it wasn't for (Hammond) in the first half, I think we could have blown them out."

Lawrence sank two free throws with 27.5 seconds left for a 55-53 lead, but Kayla Styles' basket with 2 seconds left tied it and forced overtime.

The Lady Rockets never trailed in the extra period and led 60-58 after Michaela Hunter's free throw with 1:22 left. Kara Wright tied it at 60 on a jumper with 56 seconds left, and Rockcastle County held for the final shot.

Lady Rockets coach Chrysti Noble chose not to call a timeout.

"They're experienced, and they've been here," she said. "I was like, 'No, let them go. Let them determine the outcome of the ballgame.' They did."

Lawrence drove to the lane and nailed her jumper from the right elbow.

"I was feeling it," Lawrence said. "It was a terrible-looking shot, but I had faith in myself. I knew I would hit it."

Hammond said there was a bit of confusion in the final minute.

"I kept asking, 'What offense are you running? What offense are you running?'" Hammond said. "(Lawrence) had that look in her eye that she was taking it to the hole. She's done that over and over again. We knew it was in her heart, and we trusted her for that shot."

Manual called a timeout with 0.5 second left but couldn't get a final shot.

Pendleton was left to wonder what might have been with junior guard April Wilson out since the regional final with a broken hand. He also had two seniors foul out in the final—Raven Hester with 1:29 left in regulation and Michael Guess at the 2:49 mark of overtime.

"To do all of this without April is amazing," Pendleton said. "That shows you how great this team is. . . . Michael fouling out was a huge problem, huge. You take away our No. 1 scoring punch and rebounding. That was a huge blow."

For Rockcastle County it was a huge win and gave the 12th Region its first state champion since Laurel County in 1991.

Noble, in her 21st season at Rockcastle County, said the victory was important for the school of 910 students and the community of Mount Vernon.

"It's so good to know there's something good from Rockcastle County instead of hearing all the bad stuff," she said. "There are a lot of good things that happen in our community. . . ."

"When you come through Rockcastle you'll get to see a sign up, I hope, that says, 'Welcome to Rockcastle County, 2011 state champions of girls' basketball.'"

#### SAM HOUSTON'S WALKING STICK

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, on Friday, I spoke at the Ladies Hermitage Association's Annual banquet in Nashville. This extraordinary organization, for 122 years, has preserved the home of President Andrew Jackson. No former President's home has more historical objects from a President's life than does the Hermitage. I ask unani-

mous consent that my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

I am honored to accept the Lewis R. Donelson III award, but in truth, the only appropriate person to receive the award is Lewis R. Donelson himself. Lewie is a remarkable individual. He will be 94 years of age in October. Two years ago, he shot a hole in one and he regularly shoots his age in golf. His doctor can find nothing physically wrong with him and he takes no medicine. I am convinced the only appropriate next step for Lewie is to put him into the Smithsonian.

No other family's thread runs so proudly through Tennessee's history, from John Donelson's river trip to Nashville in 1779 to Andrew Jackson's marriage to John's daughter, Rachel, to Lewie's life of distinguished public service. Thank you to the Ladies Hermitage Association for your remarkable work preserving Andrew Jackson's home.

I was sworn in as Governor of Tennessee three days early, on January 17, 1979. I did this at the request of the U.S. Attorney in order to prevent the incumbent governor from issuing pardons to prisoners whom the FBI believed had paid cash for their release. Lewis Donelson offered the prayer at that surprise inauguration ceremony. One of my first acts as governor was to direct Lewie to take charge of, and secure, the state capitol. Someone said, "Lewie has been waiting his whole life for someone to ask him to do that."

Lewis Donelson was my first appointee because I knew that if he agreed to be the chief operating officer of state government, it would help to recruit others during a time of a crisis in confidence.

Lewie's negotiating style became well known around the Capitol. He would knock you to the floor with his first offer. By the time you had gotten halfway back up you would have agreed with him and considered that a success.

About the only thing I was ever able to tell Lewie to do was to stop driving his car to the Capitol while reading a newspaper, and he only stopped that after he ran into the back of another car.

Alex Haley once told me, "Lamar, if you would say, 'let me tell you a story' instead of making a speech, people might actually listen to what you have to say." So, tonight, let me tell you the story of Andrew Jackson and Sam Houston's Walking Stick.

The setting for this story is the first half of the 19th century. Tennessee was then the fifth most populous state. This was the West. There were three Tennessee presidents—Jackson, Polk and Johnson—and two who aspired to be President: Davy Crockett and Sam Houston.

The political competition was intense. In 1834, Andrew Jackson's forces defeated the young congressman from West Tennessee, David Crockett, who then rode his horse to the courthouse steps and said to the assembled crowd what defeated politicians have always wanted to say to such voters, "I'm going to Texas and you can go to hell."

The two-party competition of that era produced strong leaders just as the reemergence of a two party system during the last half-century has sent Tennesseans to national positions from Vice President and Senate Majority Leader to Cabinet membership. There have, as yet, been no more presidents, although there have been regular attempts.

In 1807, when Thomas Jefferson was president, the widow Elizabeth Paxson Houston, aged 50, loaded six sons and three daughters into two wagons and moved from Virginia to