



# Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge

*Scott Walker , Marc Thiessen*

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**“Today, we can sound like conservatives and act like conservatives—and still win elections. Those who say we can’t don’t see what I see in Wisconsin and what my fellow governors in states all across America see. We don’t need to change our principles. What we need is more courage.”**

In 2011, Wisconsin governor Scott Walker’s chances of staying in office looked bleak.

Angry protesters—furious about his collective bargaining proposal—swarmed Madison, camped in the capitol, and attempted to block the passage of the governor’s reform legislation. Teachers unions accused him of sabotaging education. His approval numbers fell to the basement, and with the national media’s descent on Wisconsin, liberals denounced “Dead Man Walker.” He found himself fighting for his reforms, fielding death threats, and facing an unprecedented recall election.

But then something happened. Walker’s policies began to work. His constituents realized they were better off with his leadership, and in June 2012, he became the first governor in American history to survive a recall attempt, winning with a higher share of the vote than he had for his original election.

In *Unintimidated*, Governor Walker tells the story of his fight to save Wisconsin from a \$3.6 billion budget deficit while simultaneously improving the state’s schools and public infrastructure. He describes how he stood for his convictions against enormous political pressure and personal attacks. He explains how he knew his reforms would work, based on his experience as a local official.

Speaking from the perspective earned from his resounding victory, he outlines lessons conservatives on the national stage can learn from his success, such as:

- Change the polls, not your principles.
- Don’t accept the false choices presented to you.
- You can reform entitlements and survive.
- Austerity is not the answer.
- Never stop reforming.

Walker is living proof that conservatives need not move to the center to win. He argues that Republicans must offer Americans big, bold, positive solutions for our nation’s challenges—and have the courage to implement them. Walker has shown that even President Obama will back down when faced with reforms promoted with common sense and courage.

## Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge Details

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# **From Reader Review Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge for online ebook**

## **Dave Irwin says**

I am glad he is our governor.

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## **Steve says**

Well written and clear recounting of perhaps the most significant political events ever originating from Wisconsin politics. The common sense accessible writing makes reading and understanding a complex paradigm shift in political sentiment by the Wisconsin electorate a series of "ah ha moments" as background is added to the public struggle.

Perhaps even more importantly the distillation into guiding principles - a list of moral guidelines proven to succeed - principles that should be read and taken to heart by every politician who intends to be true to the public trust placed in their actions by the virtue of public election.

The importance of facing great enough problems to allow for solutions reaching into the bowels of the causes, rather than palliative fixes tweaking only symptoms, is another key lesson to take away from this book.

Core values - be decent, be fair, keep it professional and most importantly have faith in God - should reach across both sides of the aisle, and are a reminder that in the end we serve together differing on perhaps the details but unified in the goals of doing the best for the people. Recognizing the shared goal is a true statement of "hope."

Recommended read whatever your political preferences are.

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## **Linda Kalies says**

I loved this book on several levels! I loved the simplicity with which it was presented, I loved the humility and I loved the happy ending. I am proud to be a lifelong resident of the Great State of Wisconsin ( I was born in Green Bay more years ago than I care to admit ) and the way these events turned out make me even prouder of my Governor! While I was well aware of much of what was happening in Madison and, unfortunately, I am acquainted with some misguided individuals who participated in the protests against the enactment of Act 10, I had not known the extent to which they were willing to stoop. I am disgusted by most of the things described in the book but give so much Governor Walker and his Republican counterparts that had the courage to do what was right at their own personal expense and the expense of their families. This is what leadership is about and I would love to see Scott Walker on a presidential ticket!!! I voted for him twice for one term and I will vote for him again! Forward!

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## Jeff says

I found this book very interesting. The book was mostly about Walker's struggle to get the State of Wisconsin out from under the record deficits brought on during the term of his predecessor, Governor Doyle. Walker also talks about the recall elections, including his own which he won handily. There is a lot of talk of budgets, economics, and the riotous reactions to his changes. Anyone who paid attention to the news is familiar with the story but this is the story straight from Walker, and it touches on some things that the press didn't cover. The controversial reforms did end up saving WI financially. Walker became a very divisive character in State and National politics, and depending on what side of the aisle you are on your opinion can vary greatly. It was interesting to read how the private sector workers gradually came around to his plan, and how he managed to garner 11% of the votes of Obama supporters during his recall election. Overall, I really enjoyed this book.

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## Bill Krieger says

This is a fantastic book. Scott Walker is the governor of WI. In 2011, Walker faced a firestorm when he took on the public service unions in his state.

Let me start from the end.

This is a political book, so after reading it, I decided to do some due diligence. Was Scott Walker full of crap? To answer this, I invested about half an hour in Amazon reviews, Goodreads reviews, and google. Google led me to a site called Politifact which listed a couple-a dings, like how Scott Walker left college, etc. There was nothing of real substance contradicting Walker's account. Overall, Walker's book is highly rated on Amazon (4 stars) and Goodreads (3.67). I did see, however, a significant number of negative reviews that contained only leftie vitriol. Indeed, this reaction affirms the tone described in Scott Walker's book.

So, it didn't take too long to conclude - Scott Walker is NOT full of crap. His story is legit.

Walker's ghost writer, Marc Thiessen, was a speech writer for W, so the book is very well-written. And the story is riveting and flipping unbelievable. Walker's proposal to eliminate collective bargaining for public service unions in Wisconsin was met by a campaign of intimidation and blind rage by leftie unions. Walker and other repub pols were surrounded, yelled at, spit on, followed, etc. Protestors took over the state capital in Madison. Union leaders and protestors brought their hatred all the way to the homes of legislators and even involved Walker's wife and children. Read the book!

I was most impressed with two things. First, Walker's reforms were implemented and had an immediate positive impact on his state. Second, I truly admired Scott Walker's response to all the abuse heaped upon him during this trial. A religious guy, Walker, for the most part, turned the other cheek. He never stooped to the level of those against him.

There are too many stories, too much to tell. I could go on and on. Read the book! I'll pick one story for you. School choice is near and dear to my heart, so here we go...

## QOTD

Our reforms made Wisconsin's public schools better places to learn. That is important to me not just as a governor but as a father. Both my sons, Matt and Alex, attended traditional public schools - as do my nieces today. So for me, Act 10 was not simply about saving money; it was also about improving education for my kids, my nieces, and all of the other children across Wisconsin.

- Scott Walker, Unintimidated

Catch that? Scott Walker sends HIS kids to public school. President Obama, Education czar Arne Duncan, and Mayor Rahmie DO NOT. Maybe if the Obama teens attended public schools, President Obama could muster a fraction of Scott Walker's political courage on just this one issue, education, and America's future would be much brighter. But that hasn't happened.

We don't have a Scott Walker in Illinois. IL Gov Pat Quinn and our dem legislators casually raised the state income tax from 3% to 5%. Seemingly a heartbeat later, Quinn announced that paying for public employee pensions and health care was still at a crisis level. It's amazing to see the impact that one man, one leader, can have. We sorely need the determination and courage of a Scott Walker here in Illinois.

Last word. This is a good read. I have great admiration for the political courage and leadership shown by WI governor Scott Walker.

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## Steve says

Scott Walker must be America's best kept secret. How often in the past four years has the main stream media reported on the monstrous economic turnaround in Wisconsin? As the state's chief executive reported in his 2013 state of the state address, when Walker was first elected governor, "Wisconsin was facing a \$3.6 billion budget deficit." Spiraling property taxes had risen 27 percent in a decade and the jobless rate was 7.8 percent. Two years after Walker's inauguration, "Wisconsin (had) a \$342 million budget surplus." Property taxes dropped in each of those two years and the unemployment rate was cut by 1.1 percent. Why don't the other 49 states know this story? Better yet, why aren't they following in Wisconsin's footsteps? Even better, why isn't the federal government operating from the Walker playbook?

"Unintimidated" is the blow-by-blow account of how Walker led Wisconsin out of the financial wilderness. Walker and his co-writer Marc Thiessen include fourteen lessons for "conservatives . . . that can help (them) win the battle for America." Chapter 26, the most important entry in this journal, includes advice on dealing with poll numbers while sticking to principles, doing big things in a big crisis, reforming entitlements, being bold, winning the center with leadership, championing the vulnerable, being decent, owning your mistakes, continuous reformation, being relevant and winning the fairness battle.

It's amazing that Walker is rarely mentioned even by conservative pundits as a potential 2016 presidential candidate. Or, if he is, he's immediately dismissed. But, maybe that's a good thing. Perhaps we should all move to Wisconsin just to enjoy the Walker reformation. You should come away from this success story convinced that you've just seen the USA's 21st century Abraham Lincoln in action.

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### **James says**

Good book and explaining how unions ruin the prosperity of the country especially government unions.

Overall impression of Gov. Walker though is that he is an average politician and will not make it in the Nashville scene, partly because he implores his religion too often

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### **Doug says**

This is considered non fiction? Maybe to somebody who thinks The Great Pumpkin really exists, but not someone who has the gift of rational thought. I have been posting my updates on the Kindle edition.

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### **Alayna says**

I loved this book. I loved the clarity of it. The common sense. The courage of Scott Walker and his family. It saddened me to learn of all the horrific events that we the people were kept in the dark about during our state capitol's occupation but I have even more respect for Governor Walker for not making this book all about how horrible liberals are. It is respectful and matter of fact. I can't wait to vote for Scott Walker again! And again! On Wisconsin!

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### **Shirley says**

I try to make myself aware of all viewpoints to become an educated, informed citizen and I rarely ever quit reading a book before the end. But, I absolutely cannot read another page of this drivel. It is so full of his self-serving, deceptive and divisive idiocy that no one can hope to gain anything of value from reading it. Don't waste your time or money on this book.

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### **Brita says**

Book Lust

This one is going to be difficult. I don't hide the fact that I'm liberal, nor do I pretend to like my state's governor. In fact, during the lead-up to the 2012 recall election, I was campaigning from Lithuania as best I could. But I also believe that gathering evidence that only reaffirms my political beliefs is not going to help move my state forward. So with no little amount of trepidation, I picked up Scott Walker's book from the library (because as fair as I try to be, no way was I going to buy it).

It's really not so bad, and maybe I should thank his ghost-writer for that, former speech writer for George W., Marc Thiessen. The book humanizes Walker and actually made me consider the 2011 collective

bargaining fiasco in a different light, with a little more sympathy for his side. There is, of course, plenty of bias – I know the facts have been spun by both sides, so I can't only blame Walker for doing it.

My problem comes when he suggests the massive protests in Madison were organized by the "union bosses." The distress I saw on the faces of the educators I knew – college professors or public middle school teachers – said clearly that they weren't being directed by any union thugs. This was a real battle against ordinary people, not unions. Whether the battle was fair is up to your politics. The title itself, *Unintimidated*, is a little silly to me. The book practically screams, "Those big mean unions tried to scare us!" Who was he afraid of? The college students or the public school teachers? I don't doubt that he got death threats, but he had the money and manpower to protect himself.

I could go on *ad nauseam*, but I'm not here to talk about politics. The point is, the book is a good summary of Wisconsin's battle regarding collective bargaining and public employee benefits, albeit with plenty of conservative spin.

### **Verdict:**

It's not terrible. It gave me some sympathy for a man I really, really dislike, while reinforcing the fact that I will do whatever I can to make sure he is not re-elected in November. The book could serve as an introduction to non-Wisconsiners into the collective bargaining debate that has spread across the country.

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### **Skyler says**

As a proud member of a teachers' union, I came into this book with some very strong feelings about Walker and the complete annihilation his policies have wreaked on labor in Wisconsin. Perhaps not surprisingly, his book did nothing to change my low opinion of him, but it did give me a clearer understanding of his thinking and of the intricacies of Act 10.

Walker's basic explanation for why he gutted collective bargaining in Wisconsin is that it was the only way he could get the state out of its fiscal crisis that he squarely blames on his (Democratic) predecessor. Wisconsin was broke, therefore the following (in his view) had to be done:

- 1) Enact major cuts to education and local governments. He himself admits the education cuts were the biggest in the history of the state and is fully aware of their devastating consequences.
- 2) Annihilate unions' collective bargaining rights, so that school districts and local governments could significantly increase employee contributions to pensions and health care AND be able to avoid standard contract negotiations that would allow for pay increases and various other things. Throughout the book he euphemistically refers to these as the "tools" he is giving to districts and local governments to use in order to figure out how to deal with the lack of funding they suddenly must contend with.

He repeatedly states that this is the ONLY option he could use in dealing with the economic crisis, completely leaving off the table even mild tax increases to avoid budgetary cuts. In fact, and he only mentions this once in passing, he actually has the audacity to enact tax cuts on "job creators" (i.e., the wealthy). Again, he CUTS TAXES FOR THE WEALTHY, while at the same time CUTS FUNDING FOR MIDDLE CLASS JOBS.

Walker pays a lot of lip service to union employees, bringing up again and again the enormous respect he has



for workers in the public sector, which is absolutely laughable. Funny way of showing that respect, Walker-- you respect them so much that you not only slash \$1 billion dollars of their funding, but you also strip them of their right to collectively bargain. In fact, he seems almost surprised at points when discussing the wrath of the protesters who occupied the capitol building in Madison, that they could even feel so angry at him when he has said nothing but nice things about them and how hard they work. Ha.

One of the more devastating results to unions of Act 10 was the paycheck provision which allowed union workers to opt out of annual dues. Many employees chose not to pay these union dues to help offset the required increases in employee contributions to health care and pensions that they now have to make, and the result is that unions are crippled financially. Throughout the book, Walker stresses the fact that his cuts and attacks on collective bargaining rights allow him to avoid layoffs, but he gleefully gloats about the number of union staff that are forced to be laid off after the paycheck provision guts their funding. It is truly disgusting.

The book's content and Walker's justifications of Act 10 would be enough in my book to warrant a low rating. But the writing itself is pretty terrible too, especially the first half. He goes back in time and jumps ahead so much that it's a little hard to follow at times, and his circular writing style makes for a lot of repetition of the same information. Frequently, I had the thought, "Didn't I already read this passage?" because of how much he repeats stuff. His attempts at humor also fall painfully flat in a number of places, which make for awkward and stilted writing.

Other things of note:

- There is a teacher, Ms. Sampson, whom he brings up repeatedly when discussing the so-called evils of teacher unions. Basically, she was a first-year teacher who won an award (something like "Outstanding First-Year English Teacher") who was laid off due to the seniority system of "last hired, first fired." She is quoted in the book as pretty much agreeing with Walker's attacks on the teachers' unions, and later is brought up again when Walker mentions that she is later hired by his kids' high school and in fact becomes his son's teacher. But here's the thing--this poster girl has since come around and denounced her original position on Act 10 and in fact, has asked Walker repeatedly (even through media sources) to stop using her name and story as campaign propaganda. Her request first was made before the book was written, yet Walker still chose to include her AGAINST HER WISHES. And she was his son's own teacher, and he still refused to abide by her request! Think about that.

- Yes, I know he's a Republican, but there is a seriously creepy amount of cult-of-Reagan worship throughout the book. At one point, he even describes how every year he throws a party on Reagan's birthday and only serves Reagan's favorite foods. At times, his efforts to thrust Reagan on to a pedestal are ridiculous--like, did you know that Reagan's handling of the air traffic controllers' strike won us the Cold War? The fawning, the adoration, the complete adherence to the idea of Reagan's infallibility reminded me of books and documentaries I've read/seen of North Korea's Dear Leaders. It just felt really weird and came across as kind of gross in its effusiveness.

Needless to say, I am pretty glad he is out so soon of the 2016 race.

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## **Brian says**

Thoroughly enjoyed it! I love a story with a happy ending, and Unintimidated does not disappoint with everyone in Wisconsin living happily ever after! Well done Governor Walker and Thank You!

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## Caroline says

This book is garbage. Scott Walker is not an honest man and this book focuses on how he duped Wisconsin residents into ignoring the many ways in which he passed ridiculous budget cuts at the cost of women and children throughout the state.

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## Trish says

This book was published in 2013, written with Marc Thiessen, former speechwriter to Donald Rumsfeld and political columnist. It has about fourteen pages of glossy photos mostly of the recall period when protesters took over the state capitol in Madison. The pictures are frightening, of angry people in a democratic system appearing to come apart. The final third of the book after the photos is a victory lap, comparing Walker to Reagan, and even once to Obama:

“President Obama and I could not be philosophically further apart...But in some other respects, President Obama and I ran similar campaigns. We even had the same slogan: “Forward.” (...“Forward” is the Wisconsin state motto.)

The arrogance of this comparison is almost too much to bear. One wonders who paid for this book to be written. The publisher is Sentinel, a conservative imprint of Penguin Random House established in 2003.

Scott Walker was responsible for the passing of Act 10 in Wisconsin which increased the contribution from public employees to pension and health care, limited their right to collectively bargain for wages, and eliminated the requirement that beneficiaries of union bargaining pay dues. Police and firefighters were not included as public sector employees in any restriction to rights. Walker proposed the legislation immediately after taking office in 2011, with no explanation and no warning.

Later, Walker would write in this book that even his wife Tonette had no idea what he was trying to accomplish. He asked himself, “If even my own wife didn’t see why we needed to change collective bargaining, how could I expect the voters of Wisconsin to see it? I was obviously doing a lousy job of explaining our reforms.” This man is dead serious.

“Before we had introduced Act 10, we had methodically gone through every aspect of our plan of action with my cabinet. We had the legislative plan mapped out to the smallest detail. We had prepared for every contingency—even down to having the National Guard at the ready to take over state prisons if correction officers went on strike. But the one thing we had not done was to prepare the people of Wisconsin for the changes we were about to enact.”

This stunning admission that Walker considered force before explanations is terrifying. And I don't like the use of "we" because it deflects initiative and blame. The public unions were willing to increase contributions to pensions and benefits and would have discussed loopholes in the system. Even the Democratic stronghold of Rahm Emanuel's Illinois required adjustments to excessive and unfair overtime payments, among other collectively-bargained agreements that had gotten out of hand. It sometimes happens in the best-intentioned agreements. They need adjusting, not wholesale elimination.

Walker kept repeating the mantra that jobs had increased in his state after Act 10, but to my knowledge he never asked himself whether the jobs were good jobs with wages high enough to sustain families and pay taxes. Did he replace higher-paying jobs with lower-paying jobs? “I knew I had done the right thing, but I had not taken the time to explain why it was the right thing to do....Tonette is an excellent political barometer for me because she is like a lot of Wisconsin voters...” This is a real political animal at work, with a range of opinions coming to him from the far reaches of his bedroom.

Then the argument changes: “For some, it’s difficult to change. As the American Enterprise Institute’s Rick Hess points out, ‘It’s really hard for Pan Am or TWA to just turn into JetBlue’... That’s why charter schools are still important. They give innovators a chance to start the educational equivalents of JetBlue.” There is too much here to unpack & argue with—we are being hit from every direction with ink in a fan. We really need to debrief these folks and figure out what their *real* problem is with public schools. I think I know but would like to hear it from them. I believe they want to obscure the reasons for their support of charter schools because they know we cannot support them...it just isn’t teacher’s salaries. I think Jane Mayer gave us the explanation in her book *Dark Money*: indoctrination.

Six weeks before his recall election in June 2012, a year and a half after he took office, Walker went to Illinois. “This election is way bigger than me,” he said, and I think that is probably true. Lots of money and support—outside money and support—was riding on his ability to show that breaking the unions and furthering the cause of charter schools made a difference in a formerly Democratic stronghold.

“Without the recall, I would never have had the opportunity to campaign across the state to defend our record. I would never have had a reason to air television ads across the state explaining the success of our reforms...It just goes to show that the extremism of your opponents is often your greatest weapon in the fight for what is right.”

Let’s concede that last one. And give him a fight he will never forget.

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