



Unions Say Strike Can Energize Workforce

News

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Steve Roppolo was quoted in *Houston Chronicles* on February 9, 2015. The article “Unions Say Strike Can Energize Workforce” discussed how the first massive strike against the oil industry in Texas, in 35 years, has the potential to energize a labor movement in a state where unions historically have been viewed with skepticism.

Steve was quoted on the hard road that the unions face in Texas.

“It’s not like they can’t make headway,” said Steve. But, he added, there are significant cultural and other barriers, including Texans’ independent streak, that leads many to be wary of unions.

“Frankly, I think the unions’ best opportunities in Texas going forward (are) with groups who already feel marginalized,” he said, citing those such as Hispanics who work as janitors and women who work in nursing and other health care professions.

The cultural disconnect doesn’t affect those workers as much as those in more traditional industries, he said.

In some ways, Steve said, unions are victims of their success in lobbying government to improve worker safety and to boost wages.

“Employees say: Why do I really need a union to pay dues if I have government looking out for me with OSHA?” he said, referring to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Officials from the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, now part of the Steelworkers union, were instrumental in getting the agency established.

“They’ve kind of lobbied themselves out of a job,” Steve said.

This article was picked up by [*San Antonio Express News*](#) on February 9, 2015.

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