
Interview: William H. McCann, Jr.



New Hampshire labor leader: Al Gore should be impeached

William H. McCann, Jr. is a member of the Board of Directors of New Hampshire's Service Employees International Union (SEIU) statewide umbrella Local 1984 and president of Chapter 41 SEIU. He was also, until recently, a member of the New Hampshire House of Representatives (D-Dover). Representative McCann was interviewed on Jan. 18 by Marianna Wertz.

EIR: Lyndon LaRouche has called for the impeachment of Vice President Al Gore, on the constitutional grounds of bribery and treason, and because of his key role in the coup against President Bill Clinton. Gore is generally viewed negatively by organized labor, because of his pro-North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and extreme environmentalist policies. Would you join LaRouche in this call, and do you think organized labor should take a stand against Gore?

McCann: I think organized labor should take a stand, if we can develop more information to move forward with an impeachment. The concern I have is, I would not want to see two elected leaders—President and Vice President—in an impeachment process at the same time. I'd like to see closure on President Clinton's impeachment before going directly after the Vice President. If the charges can be substantiated, I think he should be impeached. But, I think, constitutionally and politically, we have to be very careful that we not have both our elected leaders on trial in one or the other body of the Legislative branch. I think that would create more of a problem at this time.

If Clinton can be acquitted in the next couple of weeks, then I think the wheels should be put in motion to immediately transform focus from the President, and look at the Vice President's actions. And, hopefully, the members of the House Judiciary Committee will look at this as quickly as they looked at the bogus information they had on the Monica Lewinsky affair.

EIR: Mr. LaRouche is insisting that the question of whether Gore has committed impeachable offenses should be investigated *now*, in order to stop the impeachment of President Clinton—to force the Congress and the population to understand that this is a coup d'état, not an impeachment trial.

McCann: I agree with what he's saying, if it could stop the Senate trial. But knowing what I've read on the process of

impeachment, I don't think that it necessarily would stop the trial. Even if the House were to pick it up today in the Judiciary Committee, until they made a finding, I don't think the Senate would necessarily react to it. If one could stop the other, that would be fine, but I don't think it can happen. I would like to think it could.

But looking at what transpired in the House, and realizing that it's clearly politically driven by a lot of members there on a Protestant view, no matter what the people who are behind it have up their sleeves, a lot of those votes and a lot of those people, like Bob Barr [R-Ga.] and some of those people on the Judiciary Committee—they were going to vote to impeach Clinton no matter what. I don't think showing them that there was a larger conspiracy to put Clinton in this position would stop them from proceeding against Clinton. That's why I'm afraid of the dual impeachment. I would like to see the Clinton impeachment end, and then the evidence against Gore be weighed and the appropriate action taken.

EIR: I think LaRouche's view is, put this out to the population and create a massive popular mandate that the Gore evidence be investigated and that the Clinton impeachment be stopped.

McCann: I don't see any problem with that. If it had the effect of stopping the trial and then voting for acquittal this week, instead of three weeks from now, I think that would be great, because I think that's what ultimately should happen: that Clinton should be acquitted and that should be the end of it. Then, if the House indicts or impeaches Gore and sends that to the Senate—and that may take what you're talking about—but I don't want to see a dual impeachment going on.

EIR: You spoke on Jan. 4 at a press conference in opposition to the ongoing coup d'état against the Presidency and, with Sen. Tom Harkin [D-Iowa], called for the exoneration of Clinton and no censure vote. The national AFL-CIO has also opposed impeachment and is organizing to stop it, but, at the same time, they are condoning a censure vote as "crucial to a fair process." Can you comment?

McCann: I think organized labor, like a lot of people, has been misled or misguided by the media and other people, who are trying to find a middle ground so that they can feel comfortable with taking some measure to say that what the

I think that President Clinton needs to have the best people around him to deal with this world crisis. Mr. LaRouche has been correct; a lot of things he has said were going to happen, have happened. I think that the President should take advantage of his expertise.

President did in his personal life was wrong. I think that's where the mistake is made. The constitutional question before the Senate now is: Did what Bill Clinton did in the office of the President, did that rise to a high crime and misdemeanor? I don't believe it did. I don't think that the House was presented a fair case. I think we'll see the President's defense begin tomorrow, and I would urge that there be a straight vote on whether to remove him or not. If he's acquitted, that should be the end of it. I don't think that there should be a censure vote, but I understand a lot of people are feeling that there has to be some other condemnation.

If they stop and think, the condemnation has been the fact that he was impeached by the House of Representatives, even though it was purely a political vote, as can be seen by the party-line vote. He will go down in history as the first elected President to be impeached by the House of Representatives. I think that that is sufficient enough censure, and I think labor or other people who are looking at some way to decide some sort of punishment, are being misguided in this idea of censure. There's no provision in the Constitution for it, and I think that if there aren't sufficient votes to remove him from the Presidency, and I don't believe there are, then the impeachment in the House, political as it was, would be the censure, and he would have to live with that, just as Andrew Johnson had to live with impeachment back in the 1860s (and he was acquitted). Now, history looks back at this [Johnson's impeachment] as a political witch-hunt. I think 50 years from now people will look back and see that this is what happened to President Clinton.

EIR: You are a member of the Board of Directors of the largest union in New Hampshire, the SEIU, with approximately 9,000 members. What are the key issues confronting your membership as we go into the new Congress?

McCann: Like everybody else, we're looking at trying to make sure that Social Security is there for our workers who are getting ready to retire. There's a lot of concern for people in my age bracket—Baby-Boomers and just prior to Baby-Boomers—we're getting within ten years of retirement. We know our state retirement system is pretty sound, but there's a serious question as to Social Security, so that's one of the key issues.

Health care is another issue. Fortunately for us, as state workers, we negotiate our health care, it's paid for by the

state. But our retirees are not negotiated for, so they have to rely on the will of the legislature in any given year. I think they would like to see some sort of health care provided through the Medicare system that's more comprehensive.

Those two issues, as well as worker safety, are issues that we are concerned about, along, obviously, with trade policy that the administration has talked about—the attempt last year at another “fast track” on NAFTA. Those are things we look at as being very important. From a local perspective, this year we're in negotiations with the state of New Hampshire for a new, two-year contract, so that's our central focus right at the moment. We want to maintain what we have, and try to provide some additional protection for safety issues. We have a lot of workers who work in health care areas, and we want to see more done to prevent injuries in those types of worksites. I think both the state and the Federal governments have to be involved in that. We're obviously watching Congress do nothing, while they sit there and watch this impeachment process. So, there is a concern there that not enough is being done.

EIR: AFL-CIO president John Sweeney identified the fight to unionize more Americans as today's civil rights movement. Today, as we celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday, how would you say this fight is going, and can you comment on its importance for all Americans?

McCann: I think it's vital that all Americans realize that the labor movement is responsible for a lot of the things they take for granted today, whether it's the 40-hour week, vacations, on-the-job safety—even though that is an ongoing issue, we wouldn't be as far along as we are today if it weren't for the work of the labor movement.

Like the civil rights movement, it's very easy to go forward for awhile and then say, “Well, we've done a good job,” and kind of rest on our laurels. The problem is, we have to keep going forward, because the forces that we're working to try to get to recognize us—the big corporations, the big state governments, etc.—they're looking at, in the case of the corporations, the profits, and they look at employees as something that can be discarded. This is a change in attitude that we've seen over the last 30 years, so it's more important now that we work to unionize as many people as we can.

Here in New Hampshire, only about 11% of the workforce is unionized, which is somewhat pathetic. We are working