

FOIA MARKER

This is not a textual record. This is used as an administrative marker by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library Staff.

Collection/Record Group: Clinton Presidential Records

Subgroup/Office of Origin: Speechwriting

Series/Staff Member: Josh Gottheimer

Subseries:

OA/ID Number: 21929

FolderID:

Folder Title:

Research for AFL-CIO - Minimum Wage Event 1/8/2001 [1]

Stack:

S

Row:

92

Section:

1

Shelf:

5

Position:

1

"Get Out The Vote"
Remarks by Governor Bill Clinton
AFL-CIO
Des Moines, IA
October 24, 1992

(NOTE: Clinton's speech coverage begins in progress)

You cannot grow an economy if all you do is cut taxes across the board for the wealthiest Americans and just get out of the way and see what happens. A lot of things don't work. For example, that theory will destroy the family farm because if you do that, you don't do what all these other countries do, which is to say that family farmers can't deal with all the up-and-down cycles of the global market and what happens to the weather and what happens to the cost of money. But they may be just as productive as big corporate farms are. And we need an agriculture policy that rewards people who are productive and who are doing what they're supposed to do and doesn't let them get the shaft from their foreign competitors. Those are the kinds of things that I think we ought to do.

But trickle-down economics says, just keep overall taxes low on the wealthiest Americans, the benefits will trickle down. It hasn't worked. We were first in the world in wages in 1980. We're down to 13th now. It's literally true that two-thirds of the American workers are putting in more hours on the job, spending less time with their children, for lower wages than they were making 10 years ago.

Now, what's the alternative with a \$400 billion deficit this year? You could raise taxes a lot and try to balance the budget, but the problem is if you did that now, if you try the tax and spend, or tax and balance the budget approach, you'd just make the unemployment problem worse; you'd make the economy worse because it's so weak.

What we've got to do is what always has worked for America and what is working for other countries now, which is to increase investment in new jobs. So here's what my strategy is. Ask the wealthiest Americans, whose taxes have been lowered while yours have gone up, to pay a little more. Ask

foreign corporations to pay the same on their income earned in America that domestic corporations pay.

But then say, look, we want you to pay more, but we want you to make more. So you don't want to pay those taxes? Instead of an across-the-board tax cut, give people incentives. You want to lower your taxes, invest in a new plant, invest in new agriculture, invest in new small business, invest in new technologies that are producing new jobs.

Invest, put the American people to work, make money the old-fashioned way. You could lower your taxes and make a million dollars, but you got to do it by putting our people to work.

Now, that will work, invest-and-grow economics. I know it will work. I know it will work.

I also think that every dollar by which we cut the defense budget--and it's going to be cut no matter who gets elected--we need to do it in a smart way that leaves us the strongest defense in the world. And I worked hard on that. Twenty-four retired generals and admirals endorsed our campaign the other day, including the deputy commander-in-chief of Desert Storm and a man who was chairman of the joint chiefs of staff under Presidents Reagan and Bush endorsed the Clinton-Gore ticket because they knew we stood for change. That's important.

But if we're going to cut defense, instead of doing it--you know what we're doing with that money today? It's your money. We're spending it on the S&L bailout, we're spending it on higher health care costs. We ought to spend every dollar of that money investing in new technologies--new roads, new bridges, new transportation systems, new water systems, new sewer systems, new solid waste recycling systems.

I see that sign out there against the landfill. Now, that's a great issue for a person in public life, to deal with where the landfill goes.

It's tough everywhere, but let me tell you something. We got too many landfills because we don't recycle enough of our solid waste.

And you know, you got a company here in this town, Green Bay Packaging, that does a lot of recycling with paper, and they have a plant in my state. And they offered to take all the newsprint and office waste paper we could get to them for the whole state to recycle. If we did that everywhere in America and if there were tax incentives for that and a system for that, we'd have a lot fewer landfills in this country and wouldn't have to deal

with that. And we ought to be doing that kind of thing.

Those things will create jobs and opportunities. The second thing I want to say is we live in a world where what we earn depends on what we can learn. It's just as simple as that. The average 18-year-old will change jobs eight times in a lifetime. And anybody running for office that stands up and gives you a speech promising to make everything hunky-dory just like it used to be, and everybody's going to have a job and nobody'll ever have to change what they do, is not telling you the truth.

The average person will have to change work eight times in a lifetime even if she or he keeps working for the same company, which means that we've got to have a system of lifetime learning that is second to none in the world. That's what we've got to have in this country.

And if you don't do it, then nobody in public life can promise you security. Security will come from the ability to constantly learn new skills and increase productivity. What does that mean? It means we ought to teach everybody in America with a job to read and give them a chance to get a high school diploma in the next five years.

It means that every young person who graduates from high school ought to have a chance, if they don't go to a college, to get at least two years of further education, in the community college or on the work site, to get a good job, not a dead-end job.

It means we ought to open the doors of college education to all Americans, make it possible for anybody to borrow the money to go to college and pay it back.

I want to come back to that in a minute. The third big idea I think we have to face is, if we don't do something to control health care costs and provide basic health care to people who can't afford it, this country's going to go broke. That is the biggest problem with the government deficit.

You hear all these people talking about the government deficit? Fifty percent of the growth of the government deficit is due to the fact that we do not control health care costs. We spend 30 percent more of our income on health care than any other country in the world, and we do less with it.

And who's getting the money? We're spending too much on insurance, too much on bureaucracy, too much on paper work, too much on prescription drugs, too much for unnecessary medical procedures, too much for a billing

procedure Einstein couldn't figure out that's got 10 or 20 billion dollars in billing fraud in it every year.

I'm telling you, it is a nightmare. I've worked real hard to figure out how to take on these interest groups and simplify this thing and make it possible for farmers and small business people and self-employed people to buy into big pools of insurance so they can get insurance on the same economic terms that people who work for big companies can.

That's what we've got to do. And it's going to require some changes on our part. We're going to have to have more preventive and primary care. We got to have more people going to the doctor the first time they get sick. When they don't get insurance, what happens? People hang around and they don't go and they don't get medical care. Then when they do get it, they get it at the emergency room, where it's sure enough expensive and all the rest of us pay for it. And we have got to have the courage to change this health care system.

Those are the three building blocks on which we can make a new economy. But there are some other things I want to say, too. Unless the American people make up their mind that we're all going to have to change, we can't get this done. And I just want to give you some examples that I have been saying for 13 months now.

I mean, everybody, business executives should not be in a position, the people running these big companies, to raise their pay by four times what their workers' pay goes up and three times what their profits go up.

I don't care--let me tell you something, I don't care what people make if their profits are going up and their workers' pay is going up. But you can't run a company where you take and everybody else gives. So we ought to have a system which rewards people who run companies--rewards them, gives them more incentives when the profits are going up and when employment's going up, but doesn't have the taxpayers underwrite executive compensation that's outrageous even when their profits are going down and the employment's going down.

Workers are going to have to be willing to constantly retrain themselves. People who borrow money from this national trust fund for a college loan that I want to set up are going to have to pay it back. You know, today the student loan program costs you \$4 billion a year because people don't pay their student loans back.

So under our system, anybody can borrow the money, no questions asked,

and

the repayment will be less onerous, because you can pay it as a small percentage of your income, so if you make less money, you pay less. But you're going to have to pay it under our system at tax time so you can't beat the bill, because we can't tolerate that.

Or the alternative would be to pay it back with two years of work for your country as a police officer, a teacher, a nurse, working with people with disabilities, working with the elderly, working with kids. We could solve a whole lot of the people problems of this country without a big government bureaucracy if people would just do that kind of work and pay their college loans off. It'd be the best investment we ever made.

We're going to have to say to the American people, a lot of our problems are family problems that governments can't solve, but government can help. I want to have the toughest system of national child support enforcement this country's ever seen. I'm tired of people crossing the state line and getting out of paying their child support.

And the only way to do that is to make sure that people, once they're in the system or the tax system, that we've got their records, we've got their number, and they can't cross the state line and get out of paying their child support. It's a national scandal and it's causing a lot of trouble.

And a lot of money in Wisconsin is coming out of the state treasury that could be going into education and job creation to pay for people on welfare because people could be making child support payments they're not making. And we ought to change that. And we're going to have to crack down on it and be very, very tough.

These are the kinds of things that I think we need to talk about. How can we create more opportunity, how can we get more responsibility, and how can we do it together? There's this great sense in this country that things are unfair, that somebody's always getting a special deal. And I think one reason is that the political leadership of our country has not been very responsible.

You know, if I tried to run the government in my home state the way they do it in Washington, where every time something doesn't work out, the president blames Congress and Congress blames the president and everybody gets off the hook by pointing the finger of blame at one another, we'd be in a terrible fix. But that's the way they do.

Now look what's going on. You've got the Justice Department investigating

the FBI and the FBI investigating the Justice Department. They don't have any time for crooks, they're too busy looking for each other.

You've got the CIA and the Justice Department fighting with each other about who lied to the federal court over this Iraq business. We kept giving Saddam Hussein money right up to the time he went into Kuwait. You've got the State Department looking into my passport files, and now they're investigating my mother.

Now, you know, it's funny because it's pathetic, but that shows you what kind of shape they're in. And what I think we need in this country is a real, real commitment to political reform. I have offered a specific plan to limit the influence of lobbyists in Washington, disclose more of their activities, to limit the cost of congressional campaigns, to limit the influence of political action committees, to open up this process. That is the kind of thing that we need to do.

People in my business should not be out making speeches to other people until we clean up our own house. I've not been—I'm the only guy running who's ever done anything to restrain the influence of the lobbyists and the only guy running for president who's never been part of the Washington establishment, never gotten a deal or sought one, but I'm telling you, we've got to clean it up. We can do that if we really have the courage to do it, but we're all going to have to change.

Now, that's my basic pitch. I think it's pretty straightforward. You get jobs by investing and competing, you keep them by being well educated, you make the country strong and whole again by facing the health care crisis that's the biggest financial crisis in the country. And we've got to have a change on the part of everybody. I think we can do this.

And let me just say before I close, I want to bring up—there are two people whom I know a little bit who are running for Congress on the Democratic ticket, one in this district whom I've known for five years now and someone I really like, Peg Lottenschliker (phonetic). Would you come on up here?

When I met this lady, she was a prosecutor, and I thought, well, if you got to go to jail, it might as well be enjoyable.

I really admire the work she's done, and I think she's the kind of independent, tough-minded person we need in the United States Congress.

And I also want to introduce Kate Helms, who's here running for the

congressional district next to us. I know some of you know her.

I want to ask you to think about one other thing before I close. About this time in the 1960 election, with about 10 days to go, when John Kennedy was running around America with his campaign, asking people to ask what they could do for their country, trying to become the first Roman Catholic president of the United States, and I might add proudly, carrying my Southern Baptist state to get there, he said that at this time in every election, the election became more about the American people than about the candidates, that the voters themselves had to decide what kind of people they were and what kind of things they wanted.

I wish every one of you could have been with me on these bus trips, the bus trip I took through Wisconsin, the bus trip I took through Georgia, the bus trip we took across Ohio and southern Illinois, to see the faces of people who have done everything they know to do and are concerned about their country.

The American people deserve better. But in the closing days of this election, you're going to see the same old thing we've always had. ~~I represent hope. Mr. Bush represents fear. I represent change, fundamental change. I think it is the best program the American people have had. One major newspaper said it was the most detailed program for change ever offered by a person challenging for the presidency.~~

And I believe that we have to have the courage to do this, but you have to decide that. This country has been around for more than 200 years because at every critical juncture in our history, the people who said, oh, things could be worse, were always drowned out by the people who said, we can do better.

I'm convinced we can do better, I think you believe we can do better. And on November 3rd, with your help, we will make America what it ought to be. Thank you and God bless you all.

Federal News Service, OCTOBER 24, 1992

Copyright 1992 Federal Information Systems Corporation
Federal News Service

OCTOBER 24, 1992, SATURDAY

SECTION: IN THE NEWS

LENGTH: 2939 words

HEADLINE: ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR BILL **CLINTON**
TO THE AFL-CIO GET OUT THE VOTE MEETING
VIA SATELLITE

BODY:

GOV. **CLINTON:** (Cheers, applause.) Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm glad to see you. I'm glad to be here. Are you ready to work for 10 more days to change America? (Cheers, applause.)

I want to say how honored I am to be back in Iowa, to be with my friend, Tom Harkin, who has done as much to help this **campaign** achieve victory as any elected official in the United States.

(Applause.)

Congressman Neal Smith and our candidates here, Jean Lloyd Jones (sp) for the United States Senate, and Lane Baxter (sp) for the United States Congress. (Applause.) Boy, I loved hearing Lane talk when he -- you know, after Bush jumped on my wife at the convention with Pat Buchanan and all that crowd and then they used the State Department to investigate me and then they got after Mother, they deserve to have Lane quote the Book of Common Prayer to them. I think that was -- (inaudible). (Cheers, applause.)

You know, today may be the best day in the rest of the **campaign** for George Bush because today's the day we set our clock back an hour, and he's been trying to do that for four years. (Cheers, applause.) But no matter how much he tries to set the clock back, as my running mate, Al Gore, said, it's still time for him to go. (Cheers, applause.)

No matter how much they try to change the subject, no matter what they say, this election is still about the economic strength of America, whether we're going to have more jobs or fewer jobs, higher incomes or lower incomes, whether we're going to preserve the middle class that made this country great, or continue to run this government for the benefit of a privileged few.

This election is about living standards, about family incomes going down \$1,600 in the last four years, and about two-thirds of the American people working harder for lower wages than they were making ten years ago. George Bush asks you to watch your wallet. You ought to. He's been picking it for four years. (Laughter, applause.)

This election is about whether we are going to finally face up to our responsibilities in the area of health care, to control costs and provide basic health care to all Americans. And it's not just a health care issue, it's an economic issue.

You want to preserve good paying jobs in the manufacturing sector? Bring American health care costs into line with those of other countries.

You want a small and vibrant small business sector? Make it possible for small businesspeople to afford their health care.

One hundred thousand people a month in this country are losing their health care costs (sic), while we persist in paying 30 percent more for health care than anybody else on earth. Why? Because we're giving it to insurance companies, to bureaucracy, to government regulation, to drug companies, to people performing procedures that aren't necessary, to unfair billing, to the kinds of things that are scandalous. (Applause.)

Mr. Bush says this election is about taxes and then proceeds to make up all kinds of stories. The truth is he's the one who said, "Read my lips" and signed the second biggest tax increase in history. He's the one who is committed -- he's going to raise taxes again in a few days when he signs the Energy Bill. He talks one way and does another, can't get out of the fact that in our state, we have the second lowest tax burden in the country and, according to the most recent study, the 10th fairest in the country.

I don't think you have to soak the middle class and break them down to raise the money we need to finance a government to promote growth and prosperity in this country. If we ask the wealthiest Americans whose taxes have been lowered to pay their fair share, people with incomes over \$200,000, if we just ask foreign companies to pay exactly the same share of their income earned in America in taxes that American companies do, we could raise the money to turn around and give \$100 billion in incentives to people to reinvest in this country. (Cheers, applause.)

You know, I think there are some real misperceptions in this country that often come out at election time. I know that you and I haven't agreed on every issue, but, you know, I think that the attempt that the Republicans have made to make labor seem as if it is against the generation of wealth and people making money is as bogus as a \$3 bill. I don't think there is a person in this audience that objects to somebody making a million dollars as long as they make it the old-fashioned way, by putting the rest of us to work and giving people a chance to make a living. (Cheers, applause.)

I am proud of the fact that in my state, where I was last night trying to bring home one of our congressional candidates, we lead the country in private sector job growth, created manufacturing jobs at roughly ten times the national average, ranked fourth in the country in manufacturing job growth this year, fourth in the reduction of poverty, fourth in the increase of income. Now, that does not comport with what George Bush says Democrats do. He's the one who's destroyed jobs in this election. I'm a job creator, and I'd like to have a chance to do it for the national government. (Cheers, applause.)

I just got back from a tour of the West, in which I told them there was a new Democratic Party that westerners ought to vote for. You know, a lot of those states I've been in, there are people who have never voted for a Democrat, certainly never voted for one for president. And I told them that when I was raised in Arkansas, there were people who had never voted for a Republican.

And we used to tell the story about a 90-year-old woman who was on her deathbed, had never missed an election, never failed to vote Democratic. She called the county clerk in, and right about to expire, she changed her registration to Republican.

And her son broke down in tears and said, "Mama, you taught me to vote Democratic and you never missed an election, and here you are, at the end of your days, changing your registration. I don't get it."

She said, "Well, son, I'm about to go, and I'd rather them lose one than us." (Laughter, applause.)

I took a **campaign** into places where that's what they thought about the Republican Party, and I told the people in Billings, Montana and in Colorado and in Eugene, Oregon and Cheyenne, Wyoming, where we had 5,000 people in an airplane hangar, the biggest rally they'd ever had in a state with only 450,000 people, that of all the people in this race, there was only one who had ever balanced a government budget, only one who'd ever pushed for lobby reform, only one who'd ever passed a program through a legislature, only one who had not been a part of the Washington establishment that they so deplore, and that was the Democratic nominee for president, and they ought to be for this. They ought to be part of a new Democratic Party that embraces all Americans who want to grow. (Cheers, applause.)

I also think that what I have tried to say in this **campaign** about personal responsibility has struck a resonant chord among all kinds of people. I think most of you would support America having the toughest child support system we can, not letting people cross the state line and evade their child support obligations -- (applause) -- not letting people beat out that.

I think most of you support the idea that we should invest in the capacity of people who are trapped in welfare, invest in their education and training, and help them support their children, and then say they ought to go to work. (Applause.)

I think most of you would support the elemental proposition that there is a huge number of people in this country who are working 40 hours a week and still living in poverty, and it's wrong. And we ought to have a tax system that instead of giving breaks to the wealthiest Americans lifts them above poverty if they work 40 hours a week and they've got children in the home. (Cheers,

applause.)

You know, these people in power today, they want you to give them four more years, and they say, "Trust me." Now, look what they can be trusted to do just here in the last few days. They've got the Justice Department and the FBI so busy investigating one another they can't look into criminals. (Laughter.) They've got the CIA and the Justice Department calling each other liars and telling the federal court that somebody lied to them in our government about this Iraq scandal, but it was the other one.

Now, they're using the State Department, instead of to establish better relations with somebody that could buy more products from us, to investigate my passport files and looking into my mother, a well-known subversive. (Laughter.) Let me tell you something, this would be funny if it weren't pathetic. Can you imagine? They are so desperate to hold on to power that they have nothing better to do with the State Department than to send three political cronies over there to work till 10:00 at night to write a memo saying how disappointed they were they couldn't dig up any dirt in my mama's file. (Applause.) I'll tell you something, you know how we could cut the budget, don't you? We could get rid of that kind of folks. You don't need them on the taxpayer dole. (Cheers, applause.) You talk about a welfare program. Look at the number of people the Republicans have padded onto the White House staff, into jobs like that in the State Department. They believe in welfare as long as it's for them. Ask Tom Harkin what they've done to the White House staff since they've been there. Quayle's staff is about five times as big as Mondale's was. They're all for welfare as long as they get it. And those folks have got too much time on their hands. If they spent half as much time investigating your problems as they have my past, this country would be in a lot better shape today. (Cheers, applause.)

You look at this administration. Under George Bush, if you assemble American products, you lose out. But if you take corporations apart, you're in like Flint. If you're a well-connected operator in Washington, he'll move heaven and earth to help you. But if you're a telephone operator or a lathe operator, he's out to lunch when you call. If you pollute the air or the water, he'll do you a favor. But if you try to clean up the streets, he'll just raise your taxes. We need to change. I think we can do better. We've got our priorities reversed, and I want to put them right. (Cheers, applause.)

You know, all over America, Al Gore ~~and I have tried to drive home the fact that when Mr. Bush promised to create 15 million new jobs in four years and 30 [million] in eight, he just didn't tell us where he was going to create those jobs. We thought he was talking about the United States.~~

(Laughter, applause.) But when you saw on 60 Minutes and Nightline that George Bush has literally spent hundreds of millions of dollars on programs designed to shut plants down here and move them overseas, I find that people actually have a hard time believing that. But it happened.

An agency of your government that you paid for actually took out ads in journals to advertise 57 cents an hour labor. Tom Harkin held up that ad in the primary. He didn't know it was paid for by tax dollars, did you?

SEN. HARKIN: Not then.

GOV. **CLINTON:** We didn't have any idea. "Rosa Martinez produces apparel for US markets on her sewing machine in El Salvador. You can hire her for 57 cents an hour." You paid for that ad.

And you know what? Their argument is that this imposes market discipline on both countries, and this will raise living standards. But guess what? After they spent your tax dollars to shut plants down in Al Gore's home state of Tennessee and move them to Central America with your tax money, you know what that did to wages in Central America? The next year, they ran an ad saying, oh, Rosa would work for 33 cents an hour. They are spending your tax money to drive wages down in the United States and in Central America. They're not even doing those folks a favor.

It is a naked example of preferring the short-term interest of big money over the long-term interest of the working people of the United States of America and Central America. I believe we can do better. I believe we can have a freer and fairer and more balanced trade policy that lifts people on both sides of the border instead of tearing them all down like the Republicans have. And we're going to change that. (Cheers, applause.)

And I might add that what they did is actually a violation of our own trade agreement. They gave a company a low-interest loan to move a plant overseas, but a company under American law can't get a low-interest loan or investment tax credit to modernize his plant here. They gave hundreds of millions of dollars to train people in other countries to take jobs we have here, but they won't spend money, even money the Congress wants them to spend, to retrain Americans here. This is crazy. And

it is wrong. And we have to change it.

No other nation, no other nation, has sought to build a high-wage, high-growth economy without a specific plan to give people incentives to invest in new plants, new small businesses, and new technologies.

No other nation has sought to build a high-wage, high-growth economy without a real strategy to invest more in roads, in bridges, in high-speed rail, in water systems, in environmental cleanup, in new communications systems.

No other nation has sought to build a high-wage, high-growth economy without a strategy for lifetime education and training of all the workforce, not just little children, but adults in their working years as well. No one else has tried to do it.

And nobody else for sure has sought to build a high-wage, high-growth economy without trying to control health care costs and provide basic health care to all. We have tried it.

These people are out of step with the entire advanced industrial world. They have trampled on the rights of American workers. They have crushed the American middle class. They have nearly bankrupted the economy. They have produced no new private sector jobs in four years. By their own criteria, their pro-business government has nearly destroyed the business sector in America. They have tried it. They've run out of ideas and energy, and we ought to run them out of town on November 3rd. (Cheers, applause.)

You know, Lane quoted the Book of Common Prayer, and if I don't be careful I'll get into quoting the scripture, and I don't want to say that God is taking a hand in partisan politics. That's the line the other crowd took at the convention, you know. But, the Bible does say that the truth shall make you free. And I ask you -- (applause) -- I ask you -- what always happens in a race like this as you get toward the end is that people begin to give in to their fears, at least that often happens. It hasn't happened here yet.

And this is clearly a race of hope against fear. I mean, the whole argument of the Bush crowd is that things could be worse. I guess they could. (Laughter.) But my whole argument is that things could be better. (Cheers.) My whole argument is that we have tried trickle-down economics for 12 years and only a nut would try the same old thing over and over again and expect a different result. (Applause.) We gave them 12 years. What do they want?

We know they don't have any real deep, abiding convictions. Look at what's happening now they are a little behind in the polls. The administration is coming apart at the seams, and all that sorry spectacle we see in Washington.

And when you strip it all away, the next 10 days will be about what kind of people we are, not so much Bill **Clinton**, Bush, Perot, but what kind of people we are. Do we really have the courage to change? Do we really believe things can be better? Can we imagine a day in which people don't work harder for less, in which our children do have a bright future, in which the end of the Cold War opens opportunities as well as presents challenges, in which we all have a new sense of our own responsibility for this economy?

And we're all willing to change, but we want it done in a fair way. I think all Americans are willing to change, to sacrifice, to do what it takes to turn this economy around, but we want it done in a fair way. And everybody knows that this administration is the embodiment of unfairness. They do not believe -- they do not believe they have any obligations to the people who work hard and play by the rules.

And I ask you to take this last 10 days and go out to your friends and neighbors, those who are in and those who are outside the labor movement, and say, we believe that America needs a new direction. We want to be a part of a new America that's growing. We want to be a part of an America where labor and management and business and government and education work together again to create a high-wage, high-growth society. We don't want our kids growing up to be the first generation of Americans to do worse than their parents. We know we're working harder than we were 20 years ago. We're working smarter than we were a few years ago. Now, we want to work together so we can be rewarded for the effort we're making and we can make America what it ought to be. Don't give into fear, folks. Be an instrument of hope, and we'll take our country back on November 3rd. Thank you. (Cheers, applause.)

END

Source: [All Sources](#) : [News](#) : [Transcripts](#) 

Terms: **clinton and campaign and afl-cio and date(geq (1/1/92) and leq (11/25/92))** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 4:28 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright](#) © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

A Short History of American Labor

This brief history of more than 100 years of the modern trade union movement in the United States can only touch the high spots of activity and identify the principal trends of a "century of achievement." In such a condensation of history, episodes of importance and of great human drama must necessarily be discussed far too briefly, or in some cases relegated to a mere mention.

What is clearly evident, however, is that the working people of America have had to unite in struggle to achieve the gains that they have accumulated during this century. Improvements did not come easily. Organizing unions, winning the right to representation, using the collective bargaining process as the core of their activities, struggling against bias and discrimination, the working men and women of America have built a trade union movement of formidable proportions.

Labor in America has correctly been described as a stabilizing force in the national economy and a bulwark of our democratic society. Furthermore, the gains that unions have been able to achieve have brought benefits, direct and indirect, to the public as a whole. It was labor, for example, that spearheaded the drive for public education for every child. The labor movement, indeed, has served as a force for American progress.

American Labor's Second Century

Now, in the 1980s, as the American trade union movement looks toward its second century, it takes pride in its first "century of achievement" as it recognizes a substantial list of goals yet to be achieved.

In this past century, American labor has played a central role in the elevation of the American standard of living. The benefits which unions have negotiated for their members are, in most cases, widespread in the economy and enjoyed by millions of our fellow citizens outside the labor movement. It is often hard to remember that what we take for granted—vacations with pay, pensions, health and welfare protection, grievance and arbitration procedures, holidays—never existed on any meaningful scale until unions fought and won them for working people.

Through these decades, the labor movement has constantly reached out to groups in the American society striving for their share of opportunity and rewards..... to the blacks, the Hispanics and other minorities..... to women striving for jobs and equal or comparable pay . . . to those who work for better schools, for the freedom of speech, press and assembly guaranteed by the Bill of Rights ... to those seeking to make our cities more livable or our rural recreation areas more available . . . to those seeking better health for infants and more secure status for the elderly.

Through these decades, in addition, the unions of America have functioned in an economy and a technology marked by awesome change. When the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions gathered in convention in 1881, Edison had two years earlier invented the electric light, and the first telephone conversation had taken place just five years before. There were no autos, no airplanes, no radio, no television, no air conditioning, no computers or calculators, no electronic games. For our modest energy needs—coal, kerosene and candles—we were independently self-sufficient.

The labor movement has seen old industries die (horse-shoeing was once a major occupation) and new industries mature. The American workforce, once predominantly "blue collar," now finds "white collar" employees and the "grey collar" people of the service industries in a substantial majority. The workforce in big mass production industries has contracted, and the new industries have required employees with

different skills in different locations. Work once performed in the United States has been moved to other countries, often at wage levels far below the American standards. Multinational, conglomerate corporations have moved operations around the globe as if it were a mammoth chessboard. The once thriving U.S. merchant marine has shriveled.

A new kind of "growth industry"-consultants to management skilled in the use of every legal loophole that can frustrate union organizing, the winning of representation elections, or the negotiation of a fair and equitable collective bargaining agreement-has mushroomed in recent years, and threatens the stability of labor-management relationships. A group of organizations generally described as the "new right" enlist their followers in retrogressive crusades to develop an anti-union atmosphere in the nation, and to repeal or mutilate various social and economic programs that have brought a greater degree of security and peace of mind to the millions of American wage earners in the middle and lower economic brackets.

Resistance to modest proposals like the labor law reform bill of 1977, and the use of lie detectors and electronic surveillance in probing the attitudes and actions of employees are a reminder that opposition to unions, while changing in style from the practices of a few decades ago, is still alive and flourishing often financed by corporate groups, trade associations and extremist ideologues.

Yet through this dizzying process of change, one need remains constant-the need for individual employees to enjoy their human rights and dignity, and to have the power to band together to achieve equal collective status in dealing with multi-million and multi-billion dollar corporations. In other words, there is no substitute for the labor union.

American labor's responsibility in its second century is to adjust to the new conditions, so that it may achieve optimum ability to represent its members and contribute to the evolutionary progress of the American democratic society.

AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland expressed that concept in his formal statement on labor's centennial in 1981:

"Labor has a unique role in strengthening contemporary American society and dealing adequately and forcefully with the challenge of the future."

"We shall rededicate ourselves to the sound principle of harnessing democratic tradition and trade union heritage with the necessity of reaching out for new and better ways to serve all working people and the entire nation."

Toward a Federation of Labor

The roots of our country's trade unions extend deep into the early history of America. Several of the Pilgrims arriving at Plymouth Rock in 1620 were working craftsmen. Captain John Smith, who led the ill-fated settlement in 1607 on Virginia's James River, pleaded with his sponsors in London to send him more craftsmen and working people.

Primitive unions, or guilds, of carpenters and cordwainers, cabinet makers and cobblers made their appearance, often temporary, in various cities along the Atlantic seaboard of colonial America. Workers played a significant role in the struggle for independence; carpenters disguised as Mohawk Indians were the "host" group at the Boston Tea Party in 1773. The Continental Congress met in Carpenters Hall in Philadelphia, and there the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. In "pursuit of happiness"

through shorter hours and higher pay, printers were the first to go on strike, in New York in 1794; cabinet makers struck in 1796; carpenters in Philadelphia in 1797; cordwainers in 1799. In the early years of the 19th century, recorded efforts by unions to improve the workers' conditions, through either negotiation or strike action, became more frequent.

By the 1820s, various unions involved in the effort to reduce the working day from 12 to 10 hours began to show interest in the idea of federation-of joining together in pursuit of common objectives for working people.

Puny as these first efforts to organize may have been, they reflected the need of working people for economic and legal protection from exploiting employers. The invention of the steam engine and the growing use of water power to operate machinery were developing a trend toward a factory system not much different from that in England which produced misery and slums for decades. Starting in the 1830s and accelerating rapidly during the Civil War, the factory system accounted for an ever-growing share of American production. It also produced great wealth for a few, grinding poverty for many.

With workers recognizing the power of their employers, the number of local union organizations increased steadily during the mid-19th century. In a number of cities, unions in various trades joined together in city-wide federations. The National Trades' Union, formed in 1834 by workers in five cities, was an early attempt at countrywide federation-but the financial panic of 1837 put an end to its efforts. In 1866 several national associations of unions functioning in one trade-printers, machinists, stone cutters, to name a few-sent delegates to a Baltimore meeting that brought forth the National Labor Union. Never very strong, it was a casualty of the sweeping economic depression of 1873.

Five years later, the Knights of Labor captured the public imagination. The Knights were an all-embracing organization committed to a cooperative society. Membership was not limited to wage earners; it was open to farmers and small business people-everybody, that is, except lawyers, bankers, stockbrokers, professional gamblers and anyone involved in the sale of alcoholic beverages. The Knights achieved a membership of nearly 750,000 during the next few years, but the skilled and unskilled workers who had joined the Knights in hope of improvement in their hours and wages found themselves frustrated by the Knights' vague organizational structure, by its officers' aversion to strikes against employers and by its leaders' reliance on the promise of future social gains instead of the hard day-to-day work of building and operating a union organization. So the stage was set for the creation of a down-to-earth, practical labor federation which could combine long range objectives of a better society with the practical activity of day-to-day union functions.

Federation of Organized Trades & Labor Unions

The first practical step in response to the need for a united labor movement was a meeting of workers' representatives from a few trades and industries at Pittsburgh on Nov. 15, 1881. The delegates came from the carpenters, the cigar makers, the printers, merchant seamen, and the steel workers, as well as from a few city labor bodies and a sprinkling of delegates from local units of the Knights of Labor.

The new Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions which they created had a constitution inspired by that of the British Trades Union Congress -which then was about a dozen years old. Its principal activity was legislative, its most important committee was concerned with legislation. The chairman of that committee was 31-year-old Samuel Gompers of the Cigar Makers Union, serving in the earliest phase of a career that was to make him the principal leader and spokesman for labor in America for the next four decades.

The Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions was a good deal less than a strongly effective organization. In its third year, it collected just \$508 in dues, and its 1884 convention brought together merely 18 delegates. Yet its fingers were clearly on the pulse of America's working class; it passed a resolution decreeing that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after May 1, 1886." It recommended to its affiliated unions that they "so direct their laws as to conform to this resolution by the time named." In the words of a much later cliché, the federation's call for the 8-hour day was clearly "an idea whose time had come." It touched off, or accelerated, a strong and vociferous national clamor for the shorter work week.

Despite the popularity of that call for action, Gompers and a number of his associates-among them, particularly, Peter J. McGuire of the Brotherhood of Carpenters-felt the time had come for reorganizing the Federation to make it a more effective center for the trade unions of the country. So, on Dec. 8, 1886, they and a few other delegates met in Columbus, Ohio, to create a renovated organization.

It was at this meeting that the American Federation of Labor evolved from the earlier Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions. The action was a giant step forward toward the development of a modern trade union movement in America. Gompers was elected president, McGuire secretary. Gompers, born in 1850, came as a boy with his parents to America from the Jewish slums of London; he entered the cigar-making trade and received much of his education as a "reader"-a worker who read books, newspaper stories, poetry and magazine articles to fellow employees to help break the monotony of their work in the shop-and became a leader of his local union and of the national Cigar Makers Union.

A statement by the founders of the AFL expressed their belief in the need for more effective union organization. "The various trades have been affected by the introduction of machinery, the subdivision of labor, the use of women's and children's labor and the lack of an apprentice system-so that the skilled trades were rapidly sinking to the level of pauper labor," the AFL declared. "To protect the skilled labor of America from being reduced to beggary and to sustain the standard of American workmanship and skill, the trades unions of America have been established."

The leadership of the early labor movement showed a keen awareness that the unions could not succeed with a "men only" philosophy, even though men were then the clearly dominant element in the labor force. In 1882 the Federation extended to "all women's labor organizations representation . . . on an equal footing." Even more explicitly-and rather grandiloquently-the AFL convention in 1894 adopted a resolution that "women should be organized into trade unions to the end that they may scientifically and permanently abolish the terrible evils accompanying their weakened, unorganized state; and we demand that they receive equal compensation with men for equal services performed."

The new AFL, with its 300,000 members in 25 unions, came on the national scene in a time of discord and struggle. Earlier in 1886, railroad workers in the Southwest had been involved in a losing strike against the properties of Jay Gould, one of the more flamboyant of the so-called "robber barons" of the post-Civil War period. On May 1, 1886, some 200,000 workers had struck in support of the effort to achieve the 8-hour day.

While the national 8-hour-day strike movement was generally peaceful, and frequently successful, it led to an episode of violence in Chicago that resulted in a setback for the new labor movement. The McCormick Harvester Company in Chicago, learning in advance of the planned strike, locked out all its employees who held union cards. Fights erupted and the police opened fire on the union members, killing four of them. A public rally at Haymarket Square to protest the killings drew a large and peaceful throng. As the meeting drew to a close, a bomb exploded near the lines of police guards, and seven of the uniformed force were killed, with some 50 persons wounded. The police began to fire into the

crowd; several more people were killed and about 200 were wounded.

Eight anarchists were arrested and charged with a capital crime. Four were executed; four others were eventually freed by Gov. John P. Altgeld of Illinois after he concluded that the trial had been unfairly conducted. No one knows for certain who planted the bomb. But as Gompers ruefully commented some time later: "The bomb not only killed the policemen, but it killed our eight-hour movement for a few years after."

The new AFL, breaking with the cloudy organizational structure that had hampered the Knights of Labor and other previous attempts at federation, placed emphasis on the autonomy of each affiliated union in its jurisdiction, and encouraged the development of practical collective bargaining to gain improvements for the membership. But it takes two to make collective bargaining work - employers and workers - and as American industry moved into a period of immense growth and power in the latter part of the 19th century, the lords of industry were little inclined to negotiate with the unions of their employees. The Sherman Antitrust Act, designed to break up the power of monopoly corporations, was used very strongly against small unions, contrary to its intent. And so, the companies grew in strength while their lawyers fought successful rearguard actions to make the law inoperative.

Thus the decade of the 1890s and the early years of the 20th century witnessed many intense struggles between essentially weak unions seeking to liberate their members from back-breaking toil under often unsafe and unhealthy working conditions for very low wages, and powerful corporations with heavy financial resources, the active or passive support of the government and its police forces, and the backing of much of the press and the general public. It was a perfect climate for union-busting and violence.

In 1891 steel boss Henry C. Frick broke a Pennsylvania strike of coke oven workers seeking the 8-hour day. But that was just a warm-up event for Frick, who as head of the Carnegie Steel Company in 1892 ordered a pay cut ranging from 18 to 26 percent. The Amalgamated Association of Iron & Steel Workers some of the stronger unions of the period-called a strike at the Carnegie plant at Homestead, Pa., to seek a rescinding of the cut in wages. Pitched battles followed between the strikers and a boatload of 300 armed Pinkerton detectives. The strikers won the battle and the Pinkertons retreated, with a death toll of seven workers, three strikebreakers and scores of wounded. The state militia then took over the town. Indictments poured out, but no one was convicted; and Frick had succeeded in breaking the strike.

The next big confrontation, in 1894, was at the Pullman plant near Chicago. The American Railroad Union-not affiliated with the AFL and led by Eugene V. Debs, a leading American socialist-struck the company's manufacturing plant, and called for a boycott of the handling of Pullman's sleeping and parlor cars on the nation's railroads. Within a week, 125,000 railroad workers were engaged in a sympathy protest strike. The government swore in 3,400 special deputies; later, at the request of the railroad association, President Cleveland moved in federal troops to break the strike-despite a plea by Gov. Altgeld of Illinois that their presence was unnecessary. Finally a sweeping federal court injunction forced an end to the sympathy strike, and many railroad workers were blacklisted. The Pullman strikers were essentially starved into submissive defeat.

The strike illustrated the increasing tendency of the government to offer moral support and military force to break strikes. The injunction, issued usually and almost automatically by compliant judges on the request of government officials or corporations, became a prime legal weapon against union organizing and action.

A Testing Period and Growth

A better method of federal intervention occurred during a 1902 strike of anthracite coal miners, under the banner of the United Mine Workers. More than 100,000 miners in northeastern Pennsylvania called a strike on May 12, and kept the mines closed all that summer. When the mine owners refused a UMW proposal for arbitration, President Theodore Roosevelt intervened on Oct. 3, and on Oct. 16 appointed a commission of mediation and arbitration. Five days later the miners returned to their jobs, and five months later the Presidential Commission awarded them a 10 percent wage increase and shorter work days-but not the formal union recognition they had sought.

The difficulties that unions experienced in fashioning their strategies for bringing workers into membership and fighting low-wage non-union competition could best be observed in a long court fight which became nationally known as the Danbury Hatters case. In 1902, the AFL hatters union instituted a national boycott of a non-union company in Danbury, Conn. The company, charging a conspiracy in restraint of trade, under the provisions of the antitrust law, filed a damage suit in the state court but lost.

The case worked its way through the federal courts over the next few years, and in 1908 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision against the union. It held that the Hatters Union had participated in an illegal secondary boycott, which was subject to federal injunctive restraint. The decision was a clear signal to the federal judiciary and to the corporations that injunctions could be used to stop various kinds of labor strikes and strike-support actions. In addition, the individual strikers were fined a total of nearly \$250,000. In 1915, the AFL proclaimed a Hatters' Day, in which workers voluntarily contributed an hours pay to help pay off the fines. The money thus collected kept 184 individual Danbury hat workers from having their homes seized in order to pay the court-ordered levy. [It is important to differentiate between direct consumer boycotts or "unfair to labor" or "don't buy" activities, which are recognized as perfectly legal when conducted in connection with or in support of labor union disputes with employers-and, on the other hand, secondary boycotts, which were the issue in the Danbury Hatters case and which were made illegal under the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act. A secondary boycott is one directed at companies or stores to try to force them not to use, or to offer for sale, products which have been made by a company involved in a strike or otherwise deemed "unfair" by the legitimate union. The secondary boycott has all but disappeared since Taft-Hartley was passed. It should be noted, however, that the courts have ruled that the Constitution's free speech provisions legally permit a union to place "informational pickets" outside a store selling "unfair" goods and calling attention to labor's "don't buy" campaign-so long as they do not call the store itself "unfair" or ask the public not to patronize the establishment.]

This was not to be the first or last example of the way in which employers have sought to redirect the thrust of laws designed to regulate corporations and instead aimed them toward labor unions and their members. Indeed, even at the current time, efforts are still being made to include labor under the antitrust and other laws originally aimed at corporations.

Not all the strikes and struggles of the period were conducted by the "sons of toil" in the nation's heavy industries. Long before the rise of the contemporary feminist movement, large numbers of women were at work-particularly in the big cities and in the men's and women's garment industry. Their grievances were real and tangible in both the textile and garment industries. Their pay was often at sweatshop levels, their hours too long, the speed-up rampant, the working conditions dreadful. Conditions such as these led in 1909 to a strike known widely as "The Uprising of the Twenty Thousand." The strikers, mostly women, almost all of them recent immigrants from eastern Europe, conducted the first big protest in the needle trades under the banner of the Ladies' Garment Workers against shirtwaist and dress manufacturers. Their plight brought widespread public support, and they gained the 52-hour work week and wage increases.



In 1910, some 50,000 cloakmakers called a strike in New York. Thanks to the efforts of Louis D. Brandeis, a lawyer later named to the U.S. Supreme Court, the dispute ended on a constructive note. A "protocol of peace" designed by Brandeis established procedures for conciliation and arbitration of future grievance disputes, as well as such important advances as the abolition of homework, the free use of electricity, 10 paid holidays a year, and piece work at rates fixed by joint union-management committees.

But a reminder that the garment industry was a good deal this side of paradise occurred in 1911, when a fire broke out at the Triangle Shirtwaist Co. on New York's lower east side. About 150 employees almost all of them young women-perished when the fire swept through the upper floors of the loft building in which they worked. Many burned to death; others jumped and died. Why so large a casualty list? The safety exits on the burning floors had been securely locked, allegedly to prevent "loss of goods." New York and the country were aroused by the tragedy. A state factory investigation committee headed by Frances Perkins (she was to become Franklin Roosevelt's secretary of labor in 1933, the first woman cabinet member in history) paved the way for many long needed reforms in industrial safety and fire prevention measures.

Another of the historic industrial conflicts prior to World War I occurred in 1912 in the textile mills of Lawrence, Mass. It was led not by an AFL union but by the radical Industrial Workers of the World-the IWW, or the Wobblies, as they were generally known -an organization in frequent verbal and physical conflict with the AFL and its affiliates. The strike in Lawrence started when the mill owners, responding to a state legislature action reducing the work **week** from 54 to 52, coldly and without prior notice cut **the** pay rates by a **31/2** percent. The move produced **predictable** results: a strike of 50,000 textile workers; arrests; fiery statements by the IWW leaders; **police** and militia attacks on peaceful meetings; and **broad** public support for the strikers. Some 400 children of strikers were "adopted" by sympathizers. When women strikers and their children were attacked at the railroad station by the police after authorities had decided no more youngsters could leave town, an enraged public protest finally forced the mill owners not only to restore the pay cuts but to increase the workers' wages to more realistic levels.

Perhaps the temper of the times in which working men and women sought to build their unions was epitomized by the attitude of George Baehr, head of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway Company, at the time of the 1902 coal strike. In Mr. Baehr's publicly expressed view, "the rights and interests of the labor man will be protected and cared for not by the labor agitators but by the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the country and upon the successful management on which so much depends." Such an attitude did not leave much room for flexibility in developing more equitable labor-management relationships.

Yet not all of the news was of strike and struggle. By 1904, the AFL could claim a membership in its affiliated unions of nearly 1,700,000 members. Ten years later, at the eve of World War I, it had climbed to about 2 million.

There were, furthermore, important legislative accomplishments. Congress, at the urging of the AFL, created a separate U.S. Department of Labor with a legislative mandate to protect and extend the rights of wage earners. A Children's Bureau, with a major concern to protect the victims of job exploitation, was created. The LaFollette Seaman's Act required urgently needed improvements in the working conditions on ships of the U.S. merchant marine. Of crucial importance, the Clayton Act of 1914 made explicit the legal concept that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce" and hence not subject to the kind of Sherman Act provisions which had been the issue in the Danbury Hatters case. The act gave a legal basis in the federal jurisdiction to strikes and boycotts and peaceful

picketing, and dramatically limited the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Little wonder that AFL President Gompers hailed the Clayton Act as a "magna carta," probably not foreseeing that future court decisions and interpretations would seriously undermine the power of the language of the law.

The Adamson Act passed by Congress in 1916 concerning work hours on the railroads was an important milestone in the decades-long effort to achieve the 8 hour day, an objective of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1884 and of many subsequent strikes. The 10-hour day-an improvement in its era-was introduced for federal government employees in 1840, but it took until the early years of the 20th century before the 8-hour work day became broadly accepted in the private sector, particularly in the printing and building trades. The mass production industries and the railroads continued their refusal to grant it.

The Adamson Act brought the shorter work day to railroad employees. It came in other industries through the impact of strikes, collective bargaining, state laws and two federal statutes: the Public Contracts Act in 1936, requiring contractors on government jobs to observe the 8-hour day, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 which provided a maximum work week for employers in interstate commerce -first a maximum of 44 hours and, after two years, 40 hours a week.

Women in the Unions

A noteworthy event in the labor movement of the early 1900s was the creation of the Women's Trade Union League, to help educate women workers about the advantages of union membership, to support their demands for better working conditions, and to acquaint the public with the serious exploitation of the rising number of women workers, many of them in "home industries" or industrial sweatshops.

It was founded by Mary O'Sullivan, a bindery worker who became the first woman organizer employed by the AFL; Jane Addams, the noted social worker and founder of Chicago's Hull House; Mary Kehew, a Boston philanthropist, and women who were officials in the unions of the garment and textile industries.

For much of its first century, the labor movement was-in huge majority composed of men. Except in a few occupations clerical work and the garment, textile, retail and hotel industries-the labor force was essentially male.

Since World War II, however, women have moved increasingly into new occupations and larger numbers of women have become full-time wage earners. As more and more women went to work, their union membership climbed, passing 7 million in 1980.

In 1984, two women were serving on the AFL-CIO Executive Council as federation vice presidents. Women also head a major AFL-CIO staff department and a national affiliate, while others hold offices of increasing responsibility in their unions.

Wartime Gains and Post-War Challenges

When the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the AFL under President Gompers' leadership worked in close cooperation with President Wilson to ensure industrial peace and a steady flow of military equipment and armaments for the American Expeditionary Force in Europe. As head of the War Committee on Labor and member of the Council for National Defense, Gompers and the unions he represented played an increasingly important role in national affairs. A wartime disputes board helped

avoid strikes and maintain production; it had the support and cooperation of the labor movement. With the vast expansion of production for military and civilian needs, unions grew rapidly during the wartime years.

A symbolic recognition of labor's new status was President Wilson's visit to Buffalo in 1917 to address the annual AFL convention-the first time a President had made such an appearance. In succeeding Administrations most Presidents, Republican and Democratic alike, spoke to the labor conventions.

One effort in which Gompers worked hard and successfully was for the creation of the International Labor Organization, an inter-governmental body headquartered in Geneva, with government, labor and employer delegates and advisers, to discuss intentional problems directly affecting workers and to seek the elevation of work standards and the rights of workers in every country. The ILO was established under the Treaty of Versailles that followed World War I. Although the U.S. Senate finally refused to ratify the treaty, the American labor movement played an important role in ILO affairs beginning in 1934, and more intensely after World War II when the ILO became a specialized international agency of the United Nations.

During the years following World War I, however, the labor movement suffered setbacks and difficulties.

While AFL membership had reached almost 4 million by 1919, the postwar reaction from employers and their allies was swift and predictable. Elbert Gary, head of U.S. Steel (the company bestowed his name on the Indiana city), refused to meet with striking workers. The AFL endorsed and supported a strike of steel workers committed to such objectives as the end of the 12-hour day, the dismantlement of company-dominated "unions," collective bargaining and wage increases. Using massive propaganda which sought to depict the strike as "unpatriotic," plus such time-tested favorites as strikebreakers, spies, armed guards and cooperative police departments, "Big Steel" finally wore down the strikers, and they were forced to return to work early in 1920 under the old conditions.

Both the steel strike and an early post-war meat packing strike found employers-not for the first time nor the last-importing blacks from southern rural areas and Mexican peasants in order to serve as strikebreakers, usually without advance knowledge of that fact until they had to face the ordeal of being escorted through hostile picket lines. These random events, however, did not prevent the labor movement from playing a role of support for future civil rights activities and legislation.

The "Roaring Twenties," nostalgically depicted in some movies and musical comedies as an era of unbounded prosperity and champagne-induced gaiety, fell a good deal short of those marks for most American working people. Throughout the decade, unemployment rose, quietly, almost anonymously. It was a time of considerable hardship for many of the unemployed, long before the days of unemployment insurance or supplementary benefits.

The postwar depression brought wages down sharply and caused major erosion of union membership-a loss of about a million members in the years from 1920 to 1923. The difficulties were multiplied by the decision of the National Association of Manufacturers and other anti-union "open shop" groups to wipe out or seriously diminish the status of American , can unions. The fear of "Bolsheviks," often hysterical, that was nurtured by the Russian communist revolution was used gleefully by the anti-union forces. As early as 1913, President John Kirby of the NAM had decided the trade union movement was "an un-American, illegal and infamous conspiracy." As the Senate Civil Liberties Committee, headed by Sen. Robert LaFollette Jr., reported years later, such demands as "union recognition, shorter hours, higher wages, regulation of child labor and the hours and wages of women and children in industry"

came to be seen-under the influence of the NAM-sponsored 'American Plan' -as aspects of the alleged communist revolution from which the anti-labor employers wanted to save the nation. Strikebreaking, blacklisting and vigilanteism became, for a time, acceptable aspects of this new and spurious brand of patriotism.

The "yellow dog contract," which workers had to sign in order to get a job, bound them never to join a union; at the same time, the corporations promoted employee representation plans or company unions-pale and generally useless imitations of the real thing.

In 1924, faced with continual attacks and decisions by the Republican and Democratic parties to present the voters with the very limited choice between President Coolidge, a laissez faire conservative, and John W. Davis, a corporation lawyer, the AFL voted to support "neither of the above" but to make an endorsement for the first time in a presidential election. Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin, an old line friend of labor and the farmers, ran on the Progress Party ticket with strong AFL backing. He drew an impressive 17 percent of the total vote.

That same year, Samuel Gompers died, leaving a heritage of admiration and respect and a philosophy of trade unionism that still today underlies much of labor's thinking. His successor was William Green, who guided the destinies of the Federation until his death in 1952. Green, born in Coshocton, Ohio, in 1873, left school to become a coal miner, joined the union, and served as Mine Workers secretary-treasurer for a dozen years before being elected AFL president. An earnest and dedicated trade unionist, Green presided over the AFL with calm dignity during a difficult period-the depression years and the years of the division of the labor movement.

The decade of the 1920s drifted on a downhill course for the labor movement. Virulent anti-unionism, the steady, creeping ascent of unemployment, and the complacent political climate engendered by the Hoover Administration had a decidedly negative effect on the fortunes of the AFL, its unions and America's working men and women in every part of the country, in every sector of the economy.

From Murdered Miners to Shiny Dimes

One chapter of the history of early-century industrial conflicts involved John D. Rockefeller, the first tycoon of the age of energy and the creator of the Standard Oil complex of corporations.

Rockefeller controlled the Colorado Fuel & Iron Corporation, whose coal miners went on strike in 1914. With their families, they were promptly evicted from company-owned homes in Ludlow, Colo.

They moved into a cluster of tents, around which National Guard soldiers took positions and at night occasionally fired their rifles into the colony. To protect the children, the miners dug a cave under the largest tent. But on Easter night 1914, company-hired gunmen and some of the National Guard poured oil over the strikers' tents and set them on fire.

As the frantic miners and their families ran for safety in the night, they were machine-gunned. Some escaped, some were wounded and 13 children and a pregnant woman in the recently dug cave all died-some with gun wounds, some from suffocation.

The nationwide protest against the killings on Rockefeller property were immediate and long sustained. Eventually, it led Rockefeller, the nation's first billionaire, to hire Ivy Lee, an early public relations man, to repair John D.'s sullied reputation.

Even as an old man, Rockefeller continued to hand out shiny new dimes to little children in the effort to erase the Ludlow image-but among the miners and workers in many other unions, the memory of Ludlow persists like an endless bad (J)team.

Depression, War and A Labor Schism Healed

December 1931-the 50th anniversary of the creation of the modern labor movement-found America and much of the world sliding down the much steeper slope of a cataclysmic economic depression. Business enterprises failed by the thousands, production plummeted, unemployment went through the roof. By 1932, when Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected President, the American economy was in chaos-and the American trade union movement was but a ghost of its former strength and numbers.

Roosevelt, taking the leadership of the all but paralyzed nation on March 4, 1933, undertook a number of programs designed to recharge the economy, feed the unemployed and restore confidence. At his urging, Congress passed the National Recovery Administration; the NRA's Section 7a specifically placed on the statute books the right of unions to exist and to negotiate with employers. Although it had no real enforcement powers, Section 7a was seen by millions of workers as a green light-if not a government invitation-to join a union.

Many AFL unions took quick advantage of the new atmosphere and soon began to register spectacular gains in membership. Some issued leaflets suggesting that "President Roosevelt wants you to join the union."

The Supreme Court soon declared NRA unconstitutional, and Section 7a was no more. Under the leadership of Senator Robert F. Wagner of New York, Congress in 1936 enacted the National Labor Relations Act-known as the Wagner Act. It went beyond "7a" to establish a legal basis for unions; set collective bargaining as a matter of national policy required by the law; provided for secret ballot elections for the choosing of unions; and protected union members from employer intimidation and coercion. That law, as amended in 1947 by the Taft-Hartley Act and in 1959 by the Landrum Griffin Act, is still in force.

The surge in union membership in the early years of the New Deal, and the potential for organizing the important non-union mass production industries like steel, automobile, rubber, textile and others, led directly to the most serious schism in the history of the modern labor movement. Heads of a number of the industrial unions in the AFL, led by John L. Lewis of the Mine Workers, called upon the AFL to finance and support big organizing campaigns in the nonunion industries on a basis that all the workers in each industry would belong to one industrial, or "vertical," union. Most of the leaders of the AFL unions presided over craft, or "horizontal" unions, and they maintained that employees of the same skills or crafts in the unorganized industries should sooner or later belong to their organizations.

In November 1935, Lewis announced the creation of the CIO-the Committee for Industrial Organization-composed of about a dozen leaders of AFL unions, to carry on the effort for industrial unionism. Lewis, born in Iowa in 1880 of Welsh immigrant parents, went to work in the coal mines and became president of the Mine Workers in 1920. An orator of remarkable virtuosity, Lewis voiced increasingly bitter attacks on his colleagues on the AFL Executive Council; his words helped speed the break. In 1936, the various CIO unions were expelled from the Federation-because, said Lewis, they favored industrial unionism; because, said AFL President Green, they had flouted procedures and rules of the AFL. In 1938 the CIO held its first constitutional convention and became the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In any event, the CIO began a remarkably successful series of organizing campaigns-and in rapid succession, over the next few years, brought industrial unionism to large sectors of basic American industry. After U.S. Steel signed with the CIO Steel Workers in the spring of 1937, major organizing efforts brought, during the next few years, first signed agreements most frequently after strike action-with major corporations in the steel, auto, rubber, glass, maritime, meat packing and other mass production industries. At the same time the unions remaining in the AFL registered even more substantial gains in membership.

The growth in union strength of both the AFL and CIO throughout the period, coupled with Roosevelt's domestic program, led to passage of a number of national social programs long advocated by the labor movement: among them, the national social security program, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, and a federal minimum wage-hour law (the original minimum hourly pay set by the 1938 statute was 25 cents an hour).

During World War II, the AFL and CIO, while preserving areas of disagreement, began to find more substantial bases for working together on problems affecting all workers. Philip Murray, who succeeded Lewis as president of the CIO, and AFL President Green served jointly and cooperatively on a number of government commissions involved in the war effort. MLirrav, born in Scotland in 1886, came as a boy to the corn fields of western Pennsylvania, and through his negotiating talents and oratorical ability rose through the Mine Workers ranks to vice president. Murray headed the CIO's Steel Workers Organizing Committee in 1936, and in 1942 he was elected president of the new United Steelworkers, a position he retained while serving as head of the CIO.

In 1952, Murray died, and was succeeded by Walter P. Reuther of the United Automobile Workers. Reuther, born in 1907 as one of four sons of a socialist brewery worker in Wheeling, W.Va., moved to Detroit during the depression and became a skilled worker in the auto industry. He was one of the prime organizers of the Auto Workers and after World War II won a closely contested battle for the UAW presidency, a post he held until his death in an airplane crash in 1970. Just a few weeks after Murray's death, William Green died, and was succeeded by George Meany, the AFL secretary-treasurer. Many of the old antagonisms had died out, many of the old issues had been resolved, and the stage was set for merger of the two labor groups. They were reunited into the AFL-CIO at a convention in New York opening on Dec. 5, 1955.

George Meany was unanimously elected president of the merged labor federation, and a new chapter opened for the American labor movement. Meany, born in the Bronx, N.Y., in 1894, followed his father's footsteps as a plumber, became active in his local union, and was elected president of the New York State Federation of Labor in 1934. On the basis of a brilliant record of helping win enactment of state labor and social legislation, he was elected AFL secretary-treasurer, to fill a vacancy, in 1939.

The AFL-CIO Years

George Meany's commitment to "the traditional objectives of the labor movement" was expanded in his role as AFL-CIO president, to include labor's "full contribution to the welfare of our neighbors, to the communities in which we live, and to the nation as a whole." In the 25 years after the merger, a number of important issues and trends emerged; they embrace both the tradition of improving working conditions and a new emphasis on issues involved in local, state, national and international affairs.

While labor's interest in politics was by no means new, the development of COPE-the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education-brought to labor a more efficient and practical means of achieving these three goals: (I) To make workers aware of the records and promises of the candidates running for

public office. (2) To encourage workers to register and to vote. (3) To endorse candidates at local, state and national levels.

The AFL-CIO merger and its accompanying agreements brought about the virtual elimination of jurisdictional disputes between unions that had plagued the labor movement and alienated public sympathy in earlier years. The unions placed a new priority on organizing workers in areas, industries and plants where no effective system of labor representation yet existed. In many cases, it meant crossing the barriers of old thinking and tired methods to reach the employees of companies which for years had resisted unions.

A major phenomenon of this period was the rapid growth of unions of government employees-federal, state and local. For many decades, postal employees, teachers, the fire fighters, and building and metal trades workers in some federal installations represented about the only substantially unionized part of public sector employment. With increasing economic pressures, more public employees turned to unions trend spurred on by such developments as an Executive Order by President Kennedy in 1962 underscoring the right of federal employees to join unions and negotiate on many issues, and by various statutes in the states and cities providing for various forms of collective bargaining with their personnel.

Throughout the years after World War II, women entered the workforce in ever increasing numbers, and especially significant was their entry into "nontraditional" occupations. A long sought objective, equal pay for equal work-was passed by Congress in 1963, prohibiting economic discrimination on the basis of sex.

Five years later, the Age Discrimination Act was passed to assist persons in the older brackets of the workforce.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964, strongly supported by the AFL-CIO, was a significant forward step toward equal rights for blacks and other minorities, at the workplace and in the community. President Johnson, in signing the act into law, acknowledged that it could not have happened without the affirmative support of the AFL-CIO.

The Civil Rights Act could trace its legislative history back to the days of World War II, when A. Philip Randolph, president of the AFL Sleeping Car Porters, persuaded President Roosevelt to issue an Executive Order establishing a Fair Employment

Practices Commission. Randolph, a brilliant union officer and civil rights champion, managed to convince FDR that governmental action to stop discrimination in hiring and promotion was essential to the wartime production effort.

The words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. illustrate the common bonds among labor, blacks, Hispanics and other minority groups: "Our needs are identical with labor's needs-decent wages, fair working conditions, livable housing, old age security, health and welfare measures, conditions in which families can grow, have education for their children and respect in the community."

Throughout these years, the AFL-CIO was forced to resist various efforts to limit the rights of unions. The so-called "right-to-work" bills, which in fact were aimed at outlawing contract language providing union security, arose in many states. In Congress there were continued efforts to expand the Hobbs Act to make every picket-line scuffle or act of violence a federal case, even though they are currently covered by state and local laws.

The increasing interest in safety on the job, heightened by the introduction of new and potentially dangerous materials used in a wide variety of industries, gave rise to labor's intensive support for a federal Occupational Safety and Health Act, which became law in 1970. Specifically, the act authorized the Secretary of Labor to establish health and safety standards, to enforce them, and to listen to employees' legitimate complaints about conditions at the workplace.

Full employment was and continues to be a first rank concern of the AFL-CIO, with its vivid recollection of past unemployment. The unions have kept insisting that whoever is able and willing to work should not be denied this opportunity. The full employment concept was endorsed by labor in its successful drive for passage of the Employment Act of 1946, which had the support of President Truman. The Humphrey-Hawkins Act of 1978 re-expressed the need to direct full attention to the problem of unemployment in the United States.

Recognition that workers have interests as consumers as well as producers has been apparent in the labor movement for many decades. Unions have played an active role in the formation of consumer cooperatives, and at both national and local levels have worked with other citizen groups for the enactment of various forms of consumer protection legislation. At the same time unions have voiced concern that apparent "bargains" of goods imported from low-wage countries may in fact be of inferior quality or workmanship and thus, in the long run, more expensive for the consumer. In recent years, there has been a vast increase in imported manufactured goods-often produced by corporations directly or indirectly related to American conglomerate companies-and the AFL-CIO has called for a revitalization of American manufacturing industries.

The strengthening of free unions throughout the world is another ongoing objective of the AFL-CIO. Special agencies functioning within the framework of the AFL-CIO carry out many of labor's efforts to move toward this goal, which was constantly expressed by George Meany: to build strong, free, noncommunist unions in the democratic societies of the free world and to resist all forms of tyranny and political repression. In fact, resistance to domination of workers and their organizations by governments or by political parties, or the control of unions by right-wing or left-wing extremist groups, has been a constant theme of American labor during the entire post-war period.

As the federal government broadened its range of social and economic programs from the 1930s onward, trade

Union interests also expanded. To meet its responsibilities to its members and as "the people's lobby," the AFL-CIO maintains a staff of experienced professionals in the fields of law, education, legislation, research, social and community services, civil rights and allied disciplines.

In addition groups of unions have developed autonomous departments of the AFL-CIO to meet specialized needs. The first of these, the Building and Construction Trades, was set up back in 1916. The Industrial Union Department was created in the AFL-CIO merger agreement. Other departments include the Union Label & Service Trades, Maritime Trades, Metal Trades, Food & Beverage, Professional Employees and Public Employees.

The George Meany Center for Labor Studies, established in 1969, plays an increasingly important role in training labor union staff and officials through a range of courses from techniques of collective bargaining to labor law institutes.

Meany retired at the AFL-CIO convention in 1979, at the age of 85; he nominated Lane Kirkland as his successor, and Thomas R. Donahue was elected secretary-treasurer. Kirkland, born in South Carolina in

1922, had been a merchant marine officer during World War II, and became a member of the Master, Mates & Pilots Union. He joined the staff of the AFL in the post-war years; filled a number of increasingly responsible positions, including that of executive assistant to Meany; and was elected secretary-treasurer of the Federation in 1969. Donahue, born in New York in 1928, served in many capacities for the Service Employees Union, both with its Local 32B in New York and as vice president of the international union. He was named in 1973 as executive assistant to Meany.

Under their leadership, the base of organized labor's effectiveness has remained firmly cemented in the unity and enthusiasm of its members. Grassroots strength and commitment were highlighted by an unprecedented "Solidarity Day" demonstration that drew more than 400,000 union members to Washington, D.C., in 1981.

The AFL-CIO also is confronting the challenges posed by revolutionary changes in the nature of work and the composition of the workforce. In 1985 the federation issued a landmark report, "The Changing Situation of Workers and Their Unions," with specific recommendations aimed at bringing about a "resurgence" of the labor movement.

Among the early products of these recommendations is an office of Comprehensive Organizing Strategies and Tactics to help affiliates develop innovative approaches to organizing. Also being explored are new concepts of benefits and services to members beyond those traditionally achieved through collective bargaining, such as a low-interest-rate credit card and supplementary health and life insurance.

Thus, the AFL-CIO continues to demonstrate the resiliency and the ability to adapt to change that have marked the American labor movement for more than 100 years.

On the Farm: Workers Seek Equality

The generally unenviable plight of agricultural workers has for many decades been a thorn in the American social conscience. Large numbers of migrant farm workers-most of them blacks or Hispanics from the South and the Southwest, as well as workers who have entered the country either on temporary work passes or illegally from the Caribbean and Mexico-have been excluded from the legal protections afforded to most workers in industry and commerce.

Suffering from low pay, abominable temporary housing, lack of access to decent schools for their children, and often deprived of adequate medical care or safety protection measures, the migrant farm workers have been too often the "forgotten people" of the American economy.

In recent years, the Farm Workers union-in the face of great difficulties-has been able to organize some of them, principally in California, and bring them the benefits of collective bargaining.

Public response, in the form of consumer boycotts of grapes and lettuce at various times, has helped their cause. The beginnings of legislation, both federal and state, and attention to their plight in the press and on television, have brought some relief to the farm workers. But much remains to be done.

Adapted from March 1981, AFL-CIO American Federationist

Chronology of Events in Labor History

- 1607—English planters found Jamestown colony and complain about lack of laborers
- 1619—Slaves from Africa first imported to colonies
- 1664—First slavery codes begin trend of making African servants slaves for life
- 1676—Bacon's Rebellion of servants and slaves in Virginia
- 1677—First recorded prosecution against strikers in New York City
- 1765—Artisans and laborers in Sons of Liberty protest oppressive British taxes
- 1770—British troops kill five dock workers in Boston Massacre
- 1773—Laborers protest royal taxation in the Boston Tea Party
- 1775—American Revolution begins
- 1786—Philadelphia printers conduct first successful strike for increased wages
- 1787—Constitution adopted
- 1791—First strike in building trades by Philadelphia carpenters for a 10-hour day
- Bill of Rights adopted
- 1800—Gabriel Prosser's slave insurrection in Virginia
- 1806—Philadelphia shoemakers found guilty of conspiracy
- 1808—Slave importation prohibited
- 1834—First turnout of "mill girls" in Lowell, Mass., to protest wage cuts
- 1835—General strike for 10-hour day in Philadelphia
- 1842—*Commonwealth v. Hunt* decision frees unions from some prosecutions
- 1843—Lowell Female Reform Association begins public campaign for 10-hour day
- 1847—New Hampshire enacts first state 10-hour-day law
- 1848—Seneca Falls women's rights convention
- 1860—Great shoemakers' strike in New England
- 1861—Abraham Lincoln takes office as president and Civil War begins
- 1863—President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation
- 1865—13th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes slavery

1866—National Labor Union founded

1867—Congress begins Reconstruction policy in former slave states

1868—14th Amendment to the Constitution gives African American freedmen the right to vote

1869—Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labor formed

Colored National Labor Union formed

1870—15th Amendment to the Constitution adopted; states the right to vote may not be abrogated by color

1875—"Yellow dog" contracts forced on textile workers in Fall River, Mass.

1877—National uprising of railroad workers

Ten Irish coal miners ("Molly Maguires") hanged in Pennsylvania; nine more subsequently were hanged

1881—Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions formed

1882—First Labor Day parade in New York City

1885—Successful strike by Knights of Labor on the Southwest (or Gould) System; the Missouri Pacific; the Missouri, Kansas and Texas; and the Wabash

1886—American Federation of Labor founded; Samuel Gompers chosen as first president

1887—Eight "anarchists" charged with the bombing in Chicago's Haymarket Square; five were executed

1890—Carpenters President P.J. McGuire and the union strike and win the eight-hour day for some 28,000 members

1892—Iron and steel workers union defeated in lockout at Homestead, Pa.

Racially integrated general strike in New Orleans succeeds

1894—Boycott of Pullman sleeping cars leads to general strike on railroads

1898—Erdman Act prohibits discrimination against railroad workers because of union membership and provides for mediation of railway labor disputes

1900—AFL and National Civic Federation promote trade agreements with employers

U.S. Industrial Commission declares trade unions good for democracy

1902—Anthracite strike arbitrated after President Theodore Roosevelt intervenes

1903—Women's Trade Union League formed at AFL convention

1905—Industrial Workers of the World founded

1907—*Bucks Stove and Range Co.* case

1908—AFL endorses Democrat William Jennings Bryan for president

Danbury Hatters case

1909—"Uprising of the 20,000"; female shirtwaist makers in New York strike against sweatshop conditions

Unorganized immigrant steel workers strike in McKees Rocks, Pa., and win all demands

NAACP founded

1911—Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire in New York kills nearly 150 workers

1912—Bread and Roses strike begun by immigrant women in Lawrence, Mass., ends with 23,000 men, women and children on strike and with as many as 20,000 on the picket line

Bill creating the Department of Labor passes at the end of congressional session

1913—Woodrow Wilson takes office as president and appoints the first secretary of labor, William B. Wilson of the Mine Workers

1914—Ludlow massacre of 13 women and children and seven men in Colorado coal miners' strike

Clayton Act passes

1917—United States enters World War I

1918—Leadership of Industrial Workers of the World sentenced to federal prison on charges of disloyalty to the United States

1919—One of every five workers walks out in great strike wave, including national coal and steel strikes; a general strike in Seattle; and a police strike in Boston

International Labor Organization founded in France

1920—19th Amendment to the Constitution gives women the right to vote

1924—Samuel Gompers dies; William Green becomes AFL president

1925—A. Philip Randolph helps create the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

- 1926—Railway Labor Act sets up procedures to settle railway labor disputes and forbids discrimination against union members
- 1929—Stock market crashes as stocks fall 40 percent; Great Depression begins
- 1931—Davis-Bacon Act provides for prevailing wages on publicly funded construction projects
- 1932—Norris-La Guardia Act prohibits federal injunctions in labor disputes
- 1933—President Franklin Roosevelt brings New Deal programs to Congress
- 1934—Upsurge in strikes, including national textile strike, which fails
- 1935—National Labor Relations Act and Social Security Act passed
Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) formed within AFL
- 1936—AFL and CIO create Labor's Non-partisan League and help President Roosevelt win re-election to a second term
- 1937—Auto workers win sit-down strike against General Motors in Flint, Mich.
Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters wins contract with Pullman Co.
- 1938—Fair Labor Standards Act establishes first minimum wage and 40-hour week
Congress of Industrial Organizations forms as an independent federation
- 1940—John L. Lewis resigns and Philip Murray becomes CIO president
- 1941—A. Philip Randolph threatens march on Washington to protest racial discrimination in defense jobs
- 1942—U.S. troops enter combat in World War II
National War Labor Board created with union members
- 1943—CIO forms first political action committee to get out the vote for President Roosevelt
- 1946—Largest strike wave in U.S. history
- 1947—Taft-Hartley Act restricts union members' activities
- 1949—First two of 11 unions with Communist leaders are purged from CIO
- 1952—William Green and Philip Murray die; George Meany and Walter Reuther become presidents of AFL and CIO, respectively
- 1955—AFL and CIO merge; George Meany becomes president

1957—AFL-CIO expels affiliates for corruption

1959—Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (Landrum-Griffin) passed

1962—President Kennedy's executive order gives federal workers the right to bargain

1963—March on Washington for Jobs and Justice

Equal Pay Act bans wage discrimination based on gender

1964—Civil Rights Act bans institutional forms of racial discrimination

1965—AFL-CIO forms A. Philip Randolph Institute

César Chávez forms AFL-CIO Farm Workers Organizing Committee

1968—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., during sanitation workers' strike

1970—Occupational Safety and Health Act passed

1972—Coalition of Black Trade Unionists formed

1973—Labor Council for Latin American Advancement founded

1974—Coalition of Labor Union Women founded

1979—Lane Kirkland elected president of AFL-CIO

1981—President Reagan breaks air traffic controllers' strike

AFL-CIO rallies 400,000 in Washington on Solidarity Day

1989—Organizing Institute created

1990—United Mine Workers of America win strike against Pittston Coal

United Steelworkers of America campaign against Ravenswood Aluminum Corp.

1992—Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance created within AFL-CIO

1995—Thomas Donahue replaces Lane Kirkland as interim head of AFL-CIO

John Sweeney elected president of AFL-CIO

1997—AFL-CIO defeats legislation giving the president the ability to "Fast Track" trade legislation without assured protection of workers' rights and the environment

Pride At Work, a national coalition of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender workers and their supporters, becomes an AFL-CIO constituency group

AFL-CIO membership shows renewed growth

1999—More than 75,000 human service workers are unionized in Los Angeles County

30,000 to 50,000 working family activists take to Seattle streets to tell the World Trade Organization and its allies, “If the Global Economy Doesn’t Work for Working Families, It Doesn’t Work”

5,000 North Carolina textile workers gain a union after a 25-year struggle

65,000 Puerto Rico public-sector workers join unions

2000—Broad Campaign for Global Fairness pushes for economic and social justice worldwide

Union movement organizes biggest program of grassroots electoral politics ever

PROGRAM

*Building
History*

PRESIDING

Mr. William F. Schnitzler, Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of
Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

INVOCATIONDR. C. LESLIE GLENN
FORMER RECTOR
ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

REMARKSMR. GEORGE MEANY
PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF
LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

DEDICATORY ADDRESS
HONORABLE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BENEDICTION
RIGHT REVEREND MONSIGNOR GEORGE HIGGINS,
DIRECTOR, SOCIAL ACTION DEPARTMENT
NATIONAL CATHOLIC WELFARE CONFERENCE

NATIONAL ANTHEMBAND
Music under the direction of Leon Brusiloff

HE NEW, eight-story national headquarters of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations is truly a "house of labor". Planned originally as the headquarters of the AFL, and now housing the headquarters of the merged labor movement, it symbolizes the merger of the AFL and the CIO into a single trade union center.

The headquarters, at the foot of 16th Street across Lafayette Square from the White House, was authorized by the AFL Executive Council in February, 1947. On April 23, 1947, the AFL purchased the historic four-story brownstone mansion on "H" Street, known as the Ashburton House. Once the British Legation in Washington, the mansion was the scene of the treaty negotiations which established the U.S. Canadian boundary in 1842.

But the AFL was reluctant to tear down one of Washington's loveliest buildings and, on May 27,

Home of American Labor

1954, entered into an amicable real estate trading agreement with historic St. John's Episcopal Church which stands on the corner of 16th and "H" Streets. That agreement with the "Church of the Presidents" deeded Ashburton House to the church to become its rectory and, in exchange, the AFL took possession of property on 16th Street, next door to land it already owned.

That agreement with St. John's, and subsequent friendly discussions with the "church next door" on building plans, cemented lasting ties of friendship between the two neighbors. All of the building plans were carefully designed to enhance the dignity of the church and to insure that the new labor headquarters did not "dominate" the church but rather served as an effective backdrop to that historic structure.

In July of 1954, the AFL signed contracts with the George A. Fuller Co., contractors for the building, and the ground-breaking ceremonies took place on August 27, 1954. Members of The Building Committee were George Meany, Harry C. Bates, the late Daniel W. Tracy, Richard Gray, William C. Doherty, William F. Schnitzler, Maurice A. Hutcheson and Joseph D. Keenan.

By April 30, 1955, construction had reached the

cornerstone-laying stage and President Dwight D. Eisenhower and President George Meany laid the building's cornerstone, at ceremonies presided over by Secretary-Treasurer William F. Schnitzler.

President George Meany, on that occasion, said the headquarters was "symbolic of the tremendous progress won by the workers of this country in the past three-quarters of a century". He called the structure a "building where the trade union movement will carry on its endeavors for even greater advances by American wage-earners in the years to come".

Mr. Meany said: "In a very real sense, the foundations for this building are not steel and stone and concrete, but the far more enduring philosophy of free trade unionism."

President Eisenhower, who said it was "right neighborly" of the AFL to invite him to participate, paid tribute to the philosophy of the American union movement, which places workers' responsibilities as American citizens above their obligations and duties to the union movement.

The President said: "So far as I am concerned, that is the philosophy that should guide the American of every calling, no matter what it is, to place the long-term good of America—all America—above any immediate and selfish reason. And in that spirit, I salute this group of leaders and every single individual that belongs to the labor movement and, indeed, all labor in America."

Then the President and Mr. Meany laid the cornerstone in which was enclosed a number of historic documents. These included copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, and the merger agreement between the AFL and CIO. Also included were statements by members of the AFL Executive Council, recording for posterity their views on the future of the labor movement. Included as well were proceedings of the 1881, 1886 and 1954 AFL conventions, the constitution and latest proceedings of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and of the International Labor Organization, along with copies of historic documents which led to the merger of the AFL and the CIO, copies of important labor legislation, artist's sketches of the building, publications of the AFL and a brief history of the labor movement.

Early in 1956, departments of the AFL-CIO began to move into the new building and the dedication ceremonies were planned for June 4, 1956.

ver this building is dedicated in 1956 — the AFL has been here laid the cornerstone in it was

union when + the labor movement at cornerstone of union

square corner at had a building

1950
by court
pg 10
1954
15 words
Doherty

our time
the labor
not impressive was built
7th Sunday 1956



HISTORIC MERGER AGREEMENT

Undeterred by previous failures, George Meany and Walter P. Reuther undertook action to bring about merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations immediately after they took office as the Presidents of their respective organizations late in 1952.

The first meeting of the Joint Unity Committee they appointed took place in Washington, D. C., April 7, 1953. The committee decided that the cause of unity would be promoted by the negotiation of a no-raiding agreement between the two organizations and their affiliates. This agreement went into effect Jan. 1, 1954 and helped to create a better atmosphere for working out a merger agreement.

This merger agreement and a proposed Constitution for the united organization was approved and signed by the Joint Unity Committee on Feb. 9, 1955.* The documents were subsequently ratified by the Executive Councils of both organizations and by their national conventions in December, 1955. Then on Dec. 5, 1955 a joint convention was held in New York City, ending the 20-year split in labor's ranks and creating the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

* Not shown in the above picture of the Unity Committee were Members Joseph Beirne and Michael J. Quill.

PIONEERS FOR A BETTER AMERICA

"Say to them that as I kept the faith, I expect they will keep the faith."

Samuel Gompers,
1850-1924



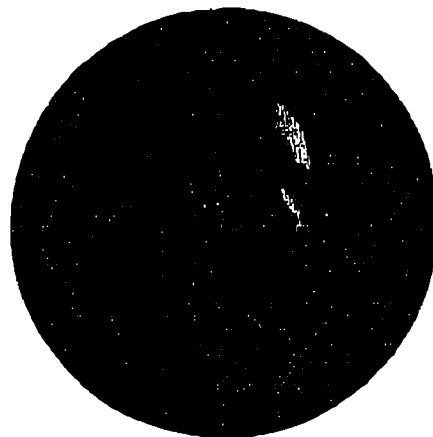
"In an economic sense, the world is being integrated. No one country can long stay prosperous in an impoverished world. . . ."

William Green,
1870-1952

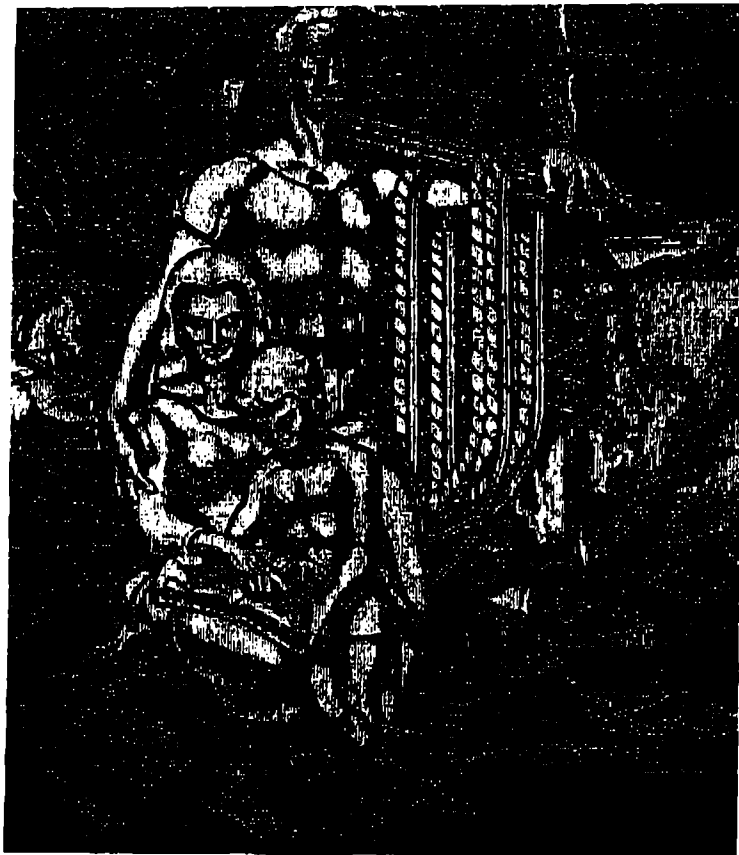


"American labor must always look to the future with imagination. . . . We have faith in the ability of man to control, for peaceful and constructive objectives, the destinies of the world we inhabit."

Philip Murray,
1886-1952



These wood carvings in bas-relief of labor's distinguished pioneers are empaneled in building's lobby.



'LABOR IS LIFE'

Man's labor as the protector and provider for the family is dramatized in the sweeping mosaic mural in the lobby of the AFL-CIO building. "Labor is life," the words of Thomas Carlyle, is the theme of the mosaic, seventeen feet high and fifty-one feet wide and one of the largest single panels of its type in the nation.

Created by Artist Lumen Winter of New York City, prize-winning mural designer whose work is found in a number of America's famous buildings, the mural required eighteen months to complete, and it contains 302,000 mosaics—five colors of gold, imported from Italy, and six colors of American marble. Work on the mosaic was executed by the Ravenna Mosaic Co. of St. Louis.

In conceiving and depicting the theme, Artist Winter was permitted complete freedom of design by the architects and builders. His semi-abstract creation has deep symbolisms, which are quickly recognizable due to the artist's bold and authentic execution. Man's domination of the machine, his yearning for peace, his protective instinct for his family—these humanisms are clearly and forcefully captured in the artist's work.

Shown on this page is the giant panel, mother and child and the father with the basic tools of labor on his shoulder

From AFL-CIO website

The American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) ~~is a~~ voluntary federation of 68 national and international labor unions.

~~Today's unions represent 13 million working women and men of every race and~~ ethnicity and from every walk of life. We are teachers and teamsters, musicians and miners, firefighters and farm workers, bakers and bottlers, engineers and editors, pilots and public employees, doctors and nurses, carpenters and laborers—and more.

In the AFL-CIO, workers and unions find the opportunity to combine strength and to work together to improve the lives of America's working families, bring fairness and dignity to the workplace and secure social and economic equity in our nation. The AFL-CIO and member unions are dedicated to four interconnecting goals critical to achieving that mission: strengthening working families by enabling more workers to join together in unions, building a stronger political voice for working families, providing a new voice for workers in the global economy and creating a more effective voice for working families in our communities.

The AFL-CIO was created in 1955 by the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The AFL-CIO's first president, George Meany, was succeeded in 1979 by Lane Kirkland, whose unexpired term was concluded by Thomas R. Donahue. In 1995, the biennial convention elected President John J. Sweeney, Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson.

Since its founding, the AFL-CIO and its affiliate unions have been the single most effective force in America for enabling working people to build better lives and futures for our families.

Together, we have:

- Negotiated with our employers for livable wages, decent health and retirement benefits and ways to improve the quality of the products and services we provide.

- Won and preserved laws to end child labor and the exploitation of sweatshops and to make our workplaces safer and healthier.

- Achieved fairer treatment for workers of color, working women, workers with disabilities and gay and lesbian workers—on the job and in society.

- Championed support for a strong public education system, the right of all children to receive a quality education and opportunities for learning throughout adulthood.

- Led efforts to promote democracy and democratic trade unionism across the globe.

- Put our skills to work repairing communities stricken by natural disaster and

aided neighbors in large and small ways—from blood donations and holiday toy drives to wiring schools for the Internet.

Pioneered ways to help working people balance our work responsibilities with other parts of our lives: our families, our congregations, our communities and our civic duties.

Worked to shape trade policies that do not allow corporate competition in the global economy to lower the living standards of working families in this and other countries.

Created important opportunities for working people to make our voices heard in the halls of government, to gain decision makers' recognition and respect for the needs of working families and to hold elected leaders accountable for their votes.

American Federation of Labor and Congress
of Industrial Org.

(AFL-CIO), a federation of autonomous trade unions in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Panama, and U.S. territories. It was formed in 1955 by the merger of the AFL and the CIO. Although it does not participate directly in COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, the AFL-CIO serves as the leading voice of American trade unionism, actively lobbying on the national and state levels and supporting political candidates. From its founding in 1886, the AFL emphasized organization of skilled workers on a craft rather than an industrial basis. Under the successive leadership of Samuel GOMPERS, William GREEN, and George MEANY, the AFL secured higher wages, shorter hours, workers' compensation, child labor laws, and exemption of labor from antitrust legislation. In the early 1930s a strong minority faction within the AFL advocated the organization of workers in basic industries (such as steel, autos, and rubber) on an industry-wide basis. John L. LEWIS led this militant group in forming a Committee for Industrial Organization, which, after expulsion from the parent body in 1938, changed its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations. The CIO, under the presidency of Lewis and later of Philip MURRAY, enjoyed considerable success. In 1955, however, at a time of growing labor concern over the perceived anti-union policies of the Eisenhower administration, the two organizations merged, with Meany as president, and adopted the present name. Lane KIRKLAND succeeded Meany as president in 1979. Ultimate authority in the AFL-CIO is vested in a biennial convention; the executive council governs between conventions. In 1992 the federation included 88 international unions, with a U.S. membership of about 14.1 million. See also UNION, LABOR.

AFL-CIO history contextualized in the history of the labor movement

Despite the popularity of that call for action, Gompers and a number of his associates-among them, particularly, Peter J.

McGuire of the Brotherhood of Carpenters-felt the time had come for reorganizing the Federation to make it a more effective center for the trade unions of the country. So, on Dec. 8, 1886, they and a few other delegates met in Columbus, Ohio, to create a renovated organization.

It was at this meeting that the American Federation of Labor evolved from the earlier Federation of Organized Trades and

Labor Unions. The action was a giant step forward toward the development of a modern trade union movement in America.

Gompers was elected president, McGuire secretary. Gompers, born in 1850, came as a boy with his parents to America from

the Jewish slums of London; he entered the cigar-making trade and received much of his education as a "reader"-a worker who

read books, newspaper stories, poetry and magazine articles to fellow employees to help break the monotony of their work in

the shop-and became a leader of his local union and of the national Cigar Makers Union.

A statement by the founders of the AFL expressed their belief in the need for more effective union organization. "The various

trades have been affected by the introduction of machinery, the subdivision of labor, the use of women's and children's labor

and the lack of an apprentice system-so that the skilled trades were rapidly sinking to the level of pauper labor," the AFL

declared. "To protect the skilled labor of America from being reduced to beggary and to sustain the standard of American

workmanship and skill, the trades unions of America have been established."

The leadership of the early labor movement showed a keen awareness that the unions could not succeed with a "men only"

philosophy, even though men were then the clearly dominant element in the labor force. In 1882 the Federation extended to "all

women's labor organizations representation . . . on an equal footing." Even more explicitly-and rather grandiloquently-the AFL

convention in 1894 adopted a resolution that "women should be organized into trade unions to the end that they may

scientifically and permanently abolish the terrible evils accompanying their weakened, unorganized state; and we demand that

they receive equal compensation with men for equal services performed."

The new AFL, with its 300,000 members in 25 unions, came on the national scene in a time of discord and struggle. Earlier in

1886, railroad workers in the Southwest had been involved in a losing strike against the properties of Jay Gould, one of the more flamboyant of the so-called "robber barons" of the post-Civil War period. On May 1, 1886, some 200,000 workers had struck in support of the effort to achieve the 8-hour day.

The new AFL, breaking with the cloudy organizational structure that had hampered the Knights of Labor and other previous attempts at federation, placed emphasis on the autonomy of each affiliated union in its jurisdiction, and encouraged the development of practical collective bargaining to gain improvements for the membership. But it takes two to make collective bargaining work - employers and workers - and as American industry moved into a period of immense growth and power in the latter part of the 19th century, the lords of industry were little inclined to negotiate with the unions of their employees. The Sherman Antitrust Act, designed to break up the power of monopoly corporations, was used very strongly against small unions, contrary to its intent. And so, the companies grew in strength while their lawyers fought successful rearguard actions to make the law inoperative.

Yet not all of the news was of strike and struggle. By 1904, the AFL could claim a membership in its affiliated unions of nearly 1,700,000 members. Ten years later, at the eve of World War 1, it had climbed to about 2 million.

There were, furthermore, important legislative accomplishments. Congress, at the urging of the AFL, created a separate U.S. Department of Labor with a legislative mandate to protect and extend the rights of wage earners. A Children's Bureau, with a major concern to protect the victims of job exploitation, was created. The LaFollette Seaman's Act required urgently needed improvements in the working conditions on ships of the U.S. merchant marine. Of crucial importance, the Clayton Act of 1914 made explicit the legal concept that "the labor of a human being is not a commodity or article of commerce" and hence not subject to the kind of Sherman Act provisions which had been the issue in the Danbury Hatters case. The act gave a legal basis in the federal jurisdiction to strikes and boycotts and peaceful picketing, and dramatically limited the use of injunctions in labor disputes. Little wonder that AFL President Gompers hailed the Clayton Act as a "magna carta," probably not foreseeing that future court decisions and interpretations would seriously undermine the power of the language of the law.

The Adamson Act passed by Congress in 1916 concerning work hours on the railroads was an important milestone in the decades-long effort to achieve the 8 hour day, an objective of the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions in 1884 and of many subsequent strikes. The 10-hour day-an improvement in its era-was introduced for federal government employees in 1840, but it took until the early years of the 20th century before the 8-hour work day became broadly accepted in the private sector, particularly in the printing and building trades. The mass production industries and the railroads continued their refusal to grant it.

The Adamson Act brought the shorter work day to railroad employees. It came in other industries through the impact of strikes, collective bargaining, state laws and two federal statutes: the Public Contracts Act in 1936, requiring contractors on government jobs to observe the 8-hour day, and the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 which provided a maximum work week for employers in interstate commerce -first a maximum of 44 hours and, after two years, 40 hours a week.

A noteworthy event in the labor movement of the early 1900s was the creation of the Women's Trade Union League, to help educate women workers about the advantages of union membership, to support their demands for better working conditions, and to acquaint the public with the serious exploitation of the rising number of women workers, many of them in "home industries" or industrial sweatshops.

It was founded by Mary O'Sullivan, a bindery worker who became the first woman organizer employed by the AFL; Jane Addams, the noted social worker and founder of Chicago's Hull House; Mary Kehew, a Boston philanthropist, and women who were officials in the unions of the garment and textile industries.

During the years following World War I, however, the labor movement suffered setbacks and difficulties.

While AFL membership had reached almost 4 million by 1919, the postwar reaction from employers and their allies was swift and predictable. Elbert Gary, head of U.S. Steel (the company bestowed his name on the Indiana city), refused to meet with striking workers. The AFL endorsed and supported a strike of steel workers committed to such objectives as the end of the

12-hour day, the dismantlement of company-dominated "unions," collective bargaining and wage increases. Using massive propaganda which sought to depict the strike as "unpatriotic," plus such time-tested favorites as strikebreakers, spies, armed guards and cooperative police departments, "Big Steel" finally wore down the strikers, and they were forced to return to work early in 1920 under the old conditions.

The AFL-CIO Years

George Meany's commitment to "the traditional objectives of the labor movement" was expanded in his role as AFL-CIO president, to include labor's "full contribution to the welfare of our neighbors, to the communities in which we live, and to the nation as a whole." In the 25 years after the merger, a number of important issues and trends emerged; they embrace both the tradition of improving working conditions and a new emphasis on issues involved in local, state, national and international affairs.

While labor's interest in politics was by no means new, the development of COPE-the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education-brought to labor a more efficient and practical means of achieving these three goals: (1) To make workers aware of the records and promises of the candidates running for public office. (2) To encourage workers to register and to vote. (3) To endorse candidates at local, state and national levels.

The AFL-CIO merger and its accompanying agreements brought about the virtual elimination of jurisdictional disputes between unions that had plagued the labor movement and alienated public sympathy in earlier years. The unions placed a new priority on organizing workers in areas, industries and plants where no effective system of labor representation yet existed. In many cases, it meant crossing the barriers of old thinking and tired methods to reach the employees of companies which for years had resisted unions.

John L.

In November 1935, Lewis announced the creation of the CIO-the Committee for Industrial Organization-composed of about a dozen leaders of AFL unions, to carry on the effort for industrial unionism. Lewis, born in Iowa in 1880 of Welsh immigrant parents, went to work in the coal mines and became president of the Mine Workers in 1920. An orator of remarkable virtuosity, Lewis voiced increasingly bitter attacks on his colleagues on the AFL Executive Council; his words helped speed the break. In 1936, the various CIO unions were expelled from the Federation-because, said Lewis, they favored industrial unionism; because, said AFL President Green, they had flouted procedures and rules of the AFL. In 1938 the CIO held its first constitutional convention and became the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

In any event, the CIO began a remarkably successful series of organizing campaigns-and in rapid succession, over the next few years, brought industrial unionism to large sectors of basic American industry. After U.S. Steel signed with the CIO Steel Workers in the spring of 1937, major organizing efforts brought, during the next few years, first signed agreements most frequently after strike action-with major corporations in the steel, auto, rubber, glass, maritime, meat packing and other mass production industries. At the same time the unions remaining in the AFL registered even more substantial gains in membership.

The growth in union strength of both the AFL and CIO throughout the period, coupled with Roosevelt's domestic program, led to passage of a number of national social programs long advocated by the labor movement: among them, the national social security program, unemployment compensation, workers' compensation, and a federal minimum wage-hour law (the original minimum hourly pay set by the 1938 statute was 25 cents an hour).

During World War II, the AFL and CIO, while preserving areas of disagreement, began to find more substantial bases for working together on problems affecting all workers. Philip Murray, who succeeded Lewis as president of the CIO, and AFL President Green served jointly and cooperatively on a number of government commissions involved in the war effort. Philip Murray, born in Scotland in 1886, came as a boy to the corn fields of western Pennsylvania, and through his negotiating talents and oratorical ability rose through the Mine Workers ranks to vice president. Murray headed the CIO's Steel Workers Organizing Committee in 1936, and in 1942 he was elected president of the new United Steelworkers, a position he retained while serving as head of the CIO.

The AFL-CIO Years

George Meany's commitment to "the traditional objectives of the labor movement" was expanded in his role as AFL-CIO president, to include labor's "full contribution to the welfare of our neighbors, to the communities in which we live, and to the nation as a whole." In the 25 years after the merger, a number of important issues and trends emerged; they embrace both the tradition of improving working conditions and a new emphasis on issues involved in local, state, national and international affairs.

While labor's interest in politics was by no means new, the development of COPE-the AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education-brought to labor a more efficient and practical means of achieving these three goals: (1) To make workers aware of the records and promises of the candidates running for public office. (2) To encourage workers to register and to vote. (3) To endorse candidates at local, state and national levels.

The AFL-CIO merger and its accompanying agreements brought about the virtual elimination of jurisdictional disputes between unions that had plagued the labor movement and alienated public sympathy in earlier years. The unions placed a new priority on organizing workers in areas, industries and plants where no effective system of labor representation yet existed. In many cases, it meant crossing the barriers of old thinking and tired methods to reach the employees of companies which for years had resisted unions.

SHOCK THE MONKEY AND WIN \$20!

Encyclopædia Britannica

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations

American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations

(AFL-CIO), American federation of autonomous labour unions formed in 1955 by the merger of the AFL (founded 1886), which was originally based on the principle of organizing workers in craft unions, and the CIO (founded 1935), which organized workers by industries.

History of the AFL.

The organization that appeared in 1886 as the American Federation of Labor (AFL, or AF of L) had as its precursor the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions, begun in 1881. The Knights of Labor, the most powerful industrial union of the era, sought to absorb the existing craft unions, to subject them to the loss of autonomy, and to involve them in industrial disputes in which their own direct interests were apparently not at stake. Against this tendency craft unions revolted under the leadership of Samuel Gompers, organizing themselves in 1886 in the loose federation that remained for half a century the sole unifying agency of the American labour movement.

In its beginnings, the American Federation of Labor was dedicated to the principles of craft unionism, so that its approximately 100 national and international unions each retained full autonomy over its own affairs as a labour organization. In return, each union received from the federation protection of the workers and industrial territory over which it claimed jurisdiction. Out of this policy grew bitter jurisdictional disputes among unions affiliated with the federation, but union membership grew.

The 1920s were the first period of economic prosperity that did not witness an expansion of unionism. During the Great Depression that followed the stock market collapse of 1929 and assumed catastrophic proportions in 1932 and early 1933, labour was too benumbed to do more than engage in a few desultory, desperate strikes. With the new administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt came a new dawn for labour.

In the new political climate, with the government's patronage of unionism, the U.S. labour movement achieved unprecedented opportunities to expand its numbers. To facilitate this, the AFL occasionally chartered federal (plant-wide) locals, but, in general, the old craft unionists, representing a majority of the federation's membership, looked askance upon industrial unions in the mass-production industries as being disruptive of the labour

movement.

History of the CIO.

The craft-industrial issue came to a head in the 1935 convention of the American Federation of Labor. The industrial-unionist resolution stating that "in the great mass production industries . . . industrial organization is the only solution" was voted down. As a result of the convention's defeat of the industrial-union resolution, representatives of eight international unions announced on Nov. 9, 1935, the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO). The AFL retaliated by warning and then, in August 1936, suspending all 10 unions (2 others had subsequently joined). But the CIO proceeded to organize such key industries as steel, rubber, and motor cars and reached agreements with such large corporations as U.S. Steel and General Motors. In the following years the CIO and the AFL engaged in a bitter struggle for leadership of American labour.

The CIO held its first convention at Pittsburgh, Pa., on Nov. 14-18, 1938, at which it adopted a new name (Congress of Industrial Organizations) and a constitution and elected John L. Lewis president.

Lewis pledged to resign as CIO president if Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom he had previously supported, was reelected in 1940. He kept his promise and was succeeded in that year by Philip Murray, who had served under Lewis in the United Mine Workers' union. In the following year the CIO organized the employees of the Ford Motor Company, the "little steel" companies (Bethlehem, Republic, Inland, and Youngstown), and other big industrial corporations that previously had refused to enter into signed agreements with it.

In 1943 the CIO established the Political Action Committee (PAC), which supported Roosevelt in his successful campaign for reelection in 1944.

Merger of the AFL and the CIO.

The passage of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947 and the growing conservatism in national labour policies implicit in the statute aroused unions to renewed political activity. The CIO joined the AFL in opposition to the new law, but political unity was only gradually translated into union unity. After the death of Philip Murray late in 1952, Walter P. Reuther, head of the CIO's United Automobile Workers, became president of the CIO; and three years later, in 1955, the AFL and the CIO merged, with George Meany, former head of the AFL, becoming president of the new federation (a post that Meany held until November 1979, a few months before his death).

The new combined union federation exhibited a concern for ethics when, in 1957, it expelled the Teamsters Union, after disclosures of corruption and labour racketeering in what was then the nation's largest union. (Not until 1987 was the Teamsters readmitted.)

The conservative Meany and the liberal Reuther never achieved more than icy cordiality, and in 1968 Meany succeeded in getting Reuther and several others expelled from the federation's executive board. Thereupon, Reuther's United Automobile Workers (UAW) promptly withdrew from the AFL-CIO. (Briefly, from 1968 to 1972, it allied with the Teamsters.) Reuther died in 1970, and, two years after Meany's retirement and Lane

Kirkland's accession to the presidency of the AFL-CIO in 1979, the UAW reaffiliated with the AFL-CIO.

From the AFL-CIO's creation in 1955, its affiliates' membership had steadily expanded to reach a high of 17 million in the late 1970s. Membership shrank thereafter to about 13 million in the mid-1990s as employment in American manufacturing industries declined, a loss only partly offset by union growth in service industries such as government, education, and retail trade and by the reaffiliation of the UAW and Teamsters.

Kirkland retired Aug. 1, 1995, and named his secretary-treasurer, Thomas R. Donahue, to fill the remainder of his term. At the organization's 1995 convention, Donahue was defeated for the presidency by John J. Sweeney, marking the first competitive election in AFL-CIO history. Sweeney, former president of the Service Employees International Union, led a dissident slate committed to reversing the federation's declining membership and waning political power. Also in 1995, the first person of colour was elected to an AFL-CIO executive office; Linda Chavez-Thompson became executive vice president.

The general organization.

The primary governing body of the AFL-CIO is the biennial convention, wherein national unions are allocated delegates in proportion to their membership. These delegates elect the president to a two-year term. The executive council, which meets at least three times a year, consists of the president, executive vice president, secretary-treasurer, and about 50 vice presidents, most of them presidents of national unions affiliated with the AFL-CIO. An executive committee of six vice presidents selected by the council meets more often with the president and secretary-treasurer to discuss policy matters. Also, a general board, consisting of the executive council and a principal officer of each affiliated union, meets at least once a year to decide policy questions referred to it.

The federation is supported by a per capita tax on affiliated unions and organizing committees. The federation engages in organizing efforts, educational campaigns on behalf of the labour movement, and political support of legislation deemed beneficial.

© 1999-2000 Britannica.com and Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

From Samuel Gompers bio -

E. S. McIntosh of the International Typographers Union; Henry Emrich, the eloquent leader of the Furniture Workers; and Adolph Strasser, the Bismarck of the Cigarmakers.

And, of course, Gompers.

This group drafted a treaty of peace to be dictated to the next national gathering of the Knights of Labor. It demanded that the Knights disband all dual unions, refrain from establishing new ones, expel any member "who works for less than the regular scale of wages fixed by the union of his craft" or anyone "convicted of scabbing, ratting, embezzlement, or any other offense against the union of his trade." It also stipulated that the Knights would not permit their members to work in any shop struck by a trade union, nor would they establish "any trade mark or label in competition with any . . . now issued, or . . . issued [in the future] by any national or international trade union."

The document effectively demanded that the Knights of Labor withdraw from the labor movement entirely. Powderly rejected this ukase, compounding the felony in Gompers's eyes with a personal attack. "The unaccountable actions" of the union officers, Powderly wrote, could only be explained by the fact that "men who indulge in excess . . . of intemperance cannot transact business with cool heads. On two occasions the men who came to . . . confer with the Executive Board [of the Knights] were too full for utterance." In October, the General Assembly of the Knights rejected the agreement.

In November 1886, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions held its sixth and last meeting in Columbus, Ohio. The trade unionists, "convinced that the old Federation could not do the effective work required," scrapped the organization, created the American Federation of Labor, and elected a slate of officers that included Gompers as president with a salary of \$1,000 a year. The AF of L was designed to fill the need "for a consolidated organization for the promotion of trade unionism [to] work . . . daily for the organization of

all workers of America, skilled as well as unskilled." The new federation "needed a central office and officers who could give all their time to the Federation work." The AF of L abandoned the Federation of Trades' program of relief by legislation; its founders "revised [the Federation of Trades'] constitution to authorize work in the economic field."

Although his salary did not begin until the following March, Gompers set to work at once with a will, a plan, and little else. The first "central office" was a small room provided rent-free by the cigarmakers' Local 144 and was furnished with a box for a chair. The full-time staff consisted of Gompers and his son Henry, hired as office boy at three dollars a week. With this meager equipment, Gompers set out to make the AF of L "something more than a paper organization." He was "president of a Federation that had been created but had yet to be given vitality." His mission had a desperate urgency, for organized labor's fortunes were at low ebb. Only trade unions could revive them, Gompers believed, and "the trade union movement stood or fell with the success of the [new] Federation."

Gompers was thirty-seven years old and had been preparing all his life for the task of federation president. He "gave everything within [him] to the work." For Gompers, one of his colleagues observed, the AF of L became "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost." He had little formal authority. The AF of L's constitution was patterned somewhat after the Constitution of the United States, but restricted the chief executive's powers to those of persuasion. To this limited commission, however, Gompers brought the potency of a well-developed gospel of labor, a potency backed by boundless energy, skill as a labor politician, a solid phalanx of dedicated supporters, and by a mixture of combativeness and patience. Above all, he had a plan, a pragmatic program distilled from the vapor of theory by trial and error. Labor must focus on immediate gains ("more, more, here and now"), must press its demands for higher wages, shorter hours, and better condi-

tions through strikes and boycotts on selected targets at appropriate times. The proper structure to carry out this program was the trade union, organized by crafts and subdivided according to geography.

The AF of L and its strategies still did not represent a calculated response to industrialization. Instead, it was an instrument forged in the heat of battle with the socialists and the Knights, and tempered by disillusionment with politics. Its designers had a far clearer perception of the Federation of Trades' shortcomings than they had of labor's plight in a mechanizing age. Its president, however, thought it (and himself) adequate to any challenge.

In December 1886, seated on his box-chair at his kitchen table-desk, Samuel Gompers set out to make the organized labor movement a growing, enduring reality in America. Eighteen years had passed since his first serious involvement — a time of painful lessons thoroughly learned. He had absorbed the wisdom of his mentors Strasser and Laurrell and left them behind as he pushed through the ranks to the head of the labor parade. Now that he was on top, he intended to stay there.

Seven and a L

18

WHEN HE BEG
Sam Gompers faced the
eration succeed? Attempt
tion had been made before
thought he knew why a
own experience how to
late. He went to work co
organization in his own i

Building the AF of L
defensive gambits. On
recruit members. "Num
not only to members b
cruits had to be consoli
units if the numbers w
ederation's strength. Go
fore, "were concentrated
ganizations" by inculcat
ism in the affiliates. Busi
and Strasser in the cig
on shop issues — seeking
conditions; ignoring po

dent, vice-president, and secretary-treasurer. The executive board was composed of the full-time officers, three auditors, and five district board members. At the time of the USWA merger, the AWA paid per-capita taxes to the CIO on 25,000 members.

Meanwhile, in competing with the powerful USWA, the ICAWU expanded its original organizing base among the workers of ALCOA to include workers of such other industry giants as Reynolds Metals and Kaiser Aluminum. On February 26, 1953, the AFL finally extended an international charter to the ICAWU, converting the directly chartered council into an independent international affiliate, the Aluminum Workers International Union. After the merger of the AFL and the CIO in 1955, the AWIU shared jurisdiction in the aluminum industry with the USWA. In competing with the Steelworkers, the much smaller AWIU maintained its own membership, although it organized fewer workers in the industry than its giant rival.

The AWIU, which maintains its national headquarters in St. Louis, holds biennial conventions. Principal officers include a president, an assistant to the president, thirteen vice-presidents, and a secretary-treasurer. The executive council is comprised of the above officials. In 1973 the AWIU reported a membership of 29,500 located in ninety-one local unions.

For further information, see the *Aluminum Light* published bimonthly by the AWIU. Published accounts of AWIU history were not located.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR (AFL). Concerned about the encroachments of the then powerful industrial-oriented Knights of Labor* (KofL) and the inability of the weak and disorganized Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions* to cope with labor's pressing problems, thirteen national unions founded the American Federation of Labor in 1886. Under Samuel Gompers, who served as president until 1924 (with the exception of one year), the AFL experienced slow but steady growth. By 1892 there were forty national unions, and the KofL was rapidly declining. Based upon the principle of autonomy for member unions, the AFL was at first meagerly supported by a small per-capita tax. The AFL mediated jurisdictional differences among member unions; brought dispersed locals together into national unions; made the organizing talents of older unions available to new ones; aided its member unions in employer negotiations; heard complaints from individual union members; established new locals for its international unions; encouraged joint organizing campaigns with full-time AFL organizers (after 1900); and made loans and donations to member unions. The AFL also chartered federal labor unions (FLUs) for the unskilled, who were unwelcome in the craft organizations. As the number of member unions grew, the AFL in 1908-1909 established three departments: building trades, metal trades, and railway employees.

After the decline of the KofL, the AFL faced its most serious challenge to the principle of "pure and simple" unionism from Socialists, both inside and outside its ranks. In 1894 the AFL leadership narrowly averted the adoption of a Socialist plank calling for collective ownership of all means of production and distribution. That same year, the AFL did endorse compulsory education, the eight-hour day, employer liability laws, abolition of contract and sweating systems, municipal ownership of utilities, and the nationalization of transportation and communications. In 1903 AFL leaders defeated the Socialists again by rejecting independent political action as a means of achieving its ends. Instead, the AFL adopted a nonpartisan approach, urging its members to support candidates favorable to labor, but it officially refrained from endorsing parties or candidates.

The end of the first decade of the twentieth century saw the defeat of the Socialists and the end or decline of other challenges from the left, such as the Western Federation of Miners (later the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers),* the American Labor Union,* and the Industrial Workers of the World.* The AFL then settled firmly on a policy of "voluntarism," rejecting any role in labor-management affairs by a distrusted government and stressing collective bargaining free from outside interference. During this period the AFL opposed proposals for minimum and maximum wages except for marginal groups, health and social insurance except accident and annuities for the aged, and unemployment insurance. State federations, central city unions, and FLUs frequently disagreed with these AFL policies and others that followed in later decades.

Initially the craft union principle emphasizing business unionism helped ensure survival. The AFL grew rapidly in membership, increasing from 264,000 in 1897 to 1,676,200 by 1904. Its position thereafter was one of relative decline, however. As the number of organizable workers increased by 50 percent between 1910 and 1930, AFL membership rose only about 9 percent, leaving the great majority of the labor force outside any union influence. Although AFL leaders blamed the unorganized themselves for this condition, the real causes lay elsewhere. A vigorous open-shop campaign begun in 1904 by several business associations successfully stressed employer and community anti-union action. Employers were buttressed by the liberal use of injunctions and by court decisions unfavorable to such vital labor concerns as the boycott, child labor, and yellow-dog contracts. But the policies of the AFL itself, stressing craft hegemony over industrial organization, especially in the mass production industries, also contributed to its own failures. Although industrial unionism had roots in the early AFL movement, the crafts dominated and insisted that their jurisdiction be respected in organizing large industries. Ironically, the craft principle that initially ensured survival later contributed to decline. FLUs of the unskilled comprised a maximum of 7 percent of AFL membership between 1897 and 1910 but only 1.3 percent in 1910. Meanwhile, AFL leaders,

fearing the unskilled would dilute the power and influence of the crafts in the AFL structure, refused to charter national unions of unskilled workers. With technology and machines modifying and destroying skills, this AFL approach to organizing the mass production industries, questionable before 1920 and totally obsolete thereafter, gave employers the upper hand in collective bargaining.

Under William Green, who became AFL president in 1924, craft domination continued. Green also sought cooperation with business, a futile policy begun at the turn of the century by Gompers and other AFL leaders who joined the National Civic Federation, an employer-dominated group. AFL membership, at 2,865,000 in 1924, remained stable until 1930 although the economy expanded considerably as new mass production industries in automobiles, rubber, chemicals, and utilities sprang up. When the depression struck, the AFL lost 850,000 members between 1930 and 1933. However, with the passage of the Norris-LaGuardia anti-injunction legislation and Section 7(a) of the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) in 1932-1933, possibilities for organizing the mass production industries seemed better than ever before.

As the NIRA spurred enthusiasm for union organization, the metal and engineering trades unions insisted vehemently on preserving their "exclusive jurisdiction" in the large industries, regardless of workers' majority wishes for one big union. The conflict over industrial versus craft unionism intensified throughout 1934 and was hardly mitigated by a craft concession that enlarged the AFL executive council to include additional industrial union spokesmen, who still remained a decided minority. Meanwhile, by the spring of 1935, organizing campaigns in steel, automobiles, aluminum, cement, and rubber failed because the FLUs received only limited jurisdiction from the executive committee while craft unions withheld crucial support.

Spurred by the intransigence of the AFL craft unions, John L. Lewis and eight other AFL union presidents formed the Committee for Industrial Organization* (CIO) in 1935 to push forward this type of unionism. The AFL executive council responded with charges of dual unionism, and in August 1936 it suspended the CIO unions, although the AFL constitution granted the council no such power. Efforts at reconciling the differences between the two groups failed until 1955.

Although eventual expulsion of the CIO unions in 1938 resulted in a membership loss of 561,000, the AFL experienced a significant spurt of growth during the early New Deal—from 2,126,000 to 3,422,000 members between 1933 and 1936. Spurred by CIO competition, the AFL began preparing a defense and counterattack, which increased its membership to over 4 million by 1939. It succeeded in holding back CIO penetration into existing areas of AFL hegemony while entering and organizing new fields in competition with the CIO.

As times changed, the AFL still adhered closely to its traditional policy of

political nonpartisanship (which it officially abandoned only once, during the presidential election of 1924). By 1944, however, AFL members were serving as delegates to the Democratic national convention, and in 1947 the AFL created a "nonpartisan" League for Political Education following the passage of the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act. The league compiled the voting records of political candidates for dissemination to union members. Meanwhile the AFL's legislative committee, organized in an earlier period, increased its activity, closely observing congressional committees and lobbying directly with congressmen.

Even before abandoning its opposition to unemployment insurance in 1932, the AFL began developing a more progressive record on other economic and social issues. In the 1920s it opposed a federal sales tax and later supported graduated income and inheritance taxes, credit control, and federal licenses for corporations. During the World War II period, the AFL opposed the oil depletion allowance and general or manufacturers' sales taxes while it supported corporation income taxes and the income withholding feature; it also opposed a wartime proposal to limit individual incomes to \$25,000. In the postwar years, the AFL favored enactment of laws to lower tax rates and to give more exemptions to low income people; to fully tax capital gains; to close loopholes in estate and gift taxes; to supply free textbooks and more money for public education; to create a stronger federal housing program; and to improve social security benefits.

In other areas of social concern, the AFL in its earlier years often had a less enviable record. The plight of the less fortunate—particularly the unskilled, immigrants, blacks, and women—was often of little concern. Those without skills were sometimes regarded as rivals more dangerous than employers. Immigrants, allegedly difficult to organize, were also potentially unskilled adversaries. Although in 1900 the AFL rejected immigration restrictions, many leaders made no secret of their preference for the "old" immigrants (North Europeans) compared to the "new" immigrants from eastern and southern Europe.

The AFL constitution prohibited racial discrimination, and in the 1890s the federation refused admission to unions whose constitutions violated this principle. However, once discriminatory phrases were removed, AFL leaders quietly countenanced the exclusion of blacks through union ritual. Throughout its history, AFL craft unions remained largely closed to blacks except for a few segregated auxiliary unions and FLUs. The AFL and its unions also had little concern for women workers, whose place ideally was considered to be in the home, and attitudes toward Oriental workers remained ignoble.

With a change of leadership in 1952, the AFL under President George Meany began to exercise stronger resistance to its overweening crafts and also made headway toward a merger with the CIO. Under a formula recognizing craft and industrial unionization, with membership open to all national, inter-

national, federal labor, and local industrial unions, the AFL merged with the CIO in 1955, seventy-five years after its founding. (For a further discussion of the merger, see the AFL-CIO sketch in this volume.)

The AFL, which maintained its national headquarters in Washington, D.C., held annual conventions. Principal officers included a president, sixteen vice-presidents, and a secretary-treasurer. The above officials constituted the executive council. At the time of the merger, the AFL received per-capita taxes from 10,593,100 members located in 110 affiliated national unions.

For further information, see the *AFL News-Reporter* and the *American Federationist*. The standard history of the AFL consists of two volumes by Philip Taft, *The A.F. of L. in the Time of Gompers* (1957) and *The A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger* (1959). Although largely superseded by Taft's volumes, Lewis L. Lorwin's *The American Federation of Labor: History, Policies, and Prospects* (1933) still has value. In volumes 2 (1955) and 3 (1964) of his *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, Philip S. Foner provides a Marxist critique of AFL activities. For biographies of AFL leaders, see Bernard Mandel, *Samuel Gompers* (1963); Stuart B. Kaufman, *Samuel Gompers and the Origins of the American Federation of Labor, 1848-1896* (1973); Max Danish, *William Green* (1952); and Joseph C. Goulden, *Meany* (1972). The conflict over industrial unionism is discussed in James O. Morris, *Conflict within the AFL: A Study of Craft Versus Industrial Unionism, 1901-1938* (1958); and Walter Galenson, *The CIO Challenge to the AFL: A History of the American Labor Movement, 1935-1941* (1960).

Merl E. Reed

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR-CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS (AFL-CIO). Continual frustration characterized early efforts to effect a reunification of the American labor movement following the Congress of Industrial Organizations'* (CIO) break with the American Federation of Labor* (AFL) during the mid-1930s. For several years thereafter leaders of both the AFL and CIO paid lip-service to the objective of labor unity and appointed committees to study and discuss the feasibility of a merger, but due to a variety of circumstances, few serious efforts were made to heal the fissure in the labor movement.

The Republican party's success in the 1946 congressional elections and the enactment of the anti-labor Taft-Hartley Act, however, rekindled interest in labor unity. The growing trend toward cooperative action was accelerated following the congressional elections of 1950 and the formation of the United Labor Policy Committee, a committee composed of AFL, CIO, and independent unions to look after labor's interest during the Korean War mobilization effort. Effective merger discussions did not occur until 1952, after the deaths of the presidents of the two rival organizations, William Green, AFL, and Philip

Murray, CIO. Their long years of bitter rivalry had resulted in hardened attitudes and mutual suspicion.

The new leaders of the AFL and CIO, George Meany and Walter Reuther, exhibited a much stronger commitment to labor unity and refused to permit minor disagreements to undermine the larger objective. More than anyone else, George Meany was responsible for the success of the merger effort. Devoting almost singular attention to the reunification effort, Meany employed his considerable leadership talent and his knowledge of internal labor politics to accomplish the task. The Republican party's success in the 1952 general elections, especially after the disastrous experience with the anti-labor Eightieth Congress, gave both Meany and Reuther added leverage in their efforts to bring affiliated unions in their respective organizations into line.

Before organic unity could be achieved, however, the highly divisive practice of raiding the membership of rival unions had to be resolved. Consequently, in June 1953, the AFL and CIO executive councils approved a proposal under which affiliates of both organizations agreed to refrain from organizing raids in cases where a union had already been certified by the National Labor Relations Board as the collective bargaining agent or where such status had been recognized by employers. The agreement became effective in July 1954 and was not binding on individual unions refusing to sign the agreement, but both AFL and CIO officials exerted considerable pressure to gain voluntary compliance.

The significant progress toward resolution of the raiding issue spurred the merger drive. The executive councils of the AFL and CIO quickly ratified (February 1955) the basic merger agreement reached by the joint unity committee. By May the committee had published a proposed constitution for the new federation. At its final meeting, held on July 20, 1955, the unity committee agreed to recommend that the new federation be named the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Under the terms of the merger, all AFL and CIO affiliates were granted membership in the new federation. Existing organizing jurisdictions were recognized, but international unions with identical or overlapping jurisdictions were encouraged to merge. AFL state-city federations and comparable CIO industrial union councils were given two years to arrange a merger. The AFL's well-developed department structure was retained, and a new department—the industrial union department—was established to serve CIO and AFL industrial unions.

Delegates to the national conventions of the AFL and CIO during the fall of 1955 accepted the agreement with little opposition, and the first national convention of the AFL-CIO met on December 5, 1955. Under the terms of the agreement, George Meany became president and William Schnitzler secretary-treasurer. Walter Reuther assumed the presidency of the industrial union department.

Although the merger created numerous internal problems, especially involving the efforts to integrate such important committees as education, research, and foreign affairs, the exposure of corrupt union practices absorbed much of the time and attention of AFL-CIO leaders during the years immediately following the merger. Even before the merger, leaders of both organizations recognized the existence of serious problems within the administration of various international union health and welfare funds. The AFL-CIO ethical practices committee, established at the time of the merger, opened investigations of the financial practices of the International Union of Allied Industrial Workers of America* (AIW), Distillery, Rectifying, Wine and Allied Workers International Union of America* (DRWAWIUA), and the Laundry, Dry Cleaning and Dye House Workers International Union* (LDC&DHWIU).

In the midst of efforts to rectify their own affairs, AFL-CIO leaders confronted the specter of a special Senate investigating committee chaired by Senator John L. McClellan of Arkansas, a legislator whose antipathy toward the labor movement was well known. The McClellan committee, organized to investigate labor-management racketeering, immediately began a probe into the affairs of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers of America* (IBT). Further investigation also revealed widespread misuse of funds by officials of the United Textile Workers of America* (UTWA) and the Bakery and Confectionery Workers' International Union of America* (BCWIUA).

The AFL-CIO leadership responded to these exposures by launching its own investigation of the IBT, BCWIUA, and the UTWA. Meanwhile, the AIW, DRWAWIUA, and LDC&DHWIU were suspended for failing to comply with the reforms ordered by the ethical practices committee. The IBT and UTWA were suspended in the fall of 1957, and the AFL-CIO gave the BCWIUA ninety days to adopt required reforms. After reviewing the progress made by various international unions in reforming their administrative practices, in December 1957 the AFL-CIO expelled the IBT, BCWIUA, and the LDC&DHWIU, and eventually restored the other suspended unions to full autonomy. After the expulsion of the BCWIUA and the LDC&DHWIU, the AFL-CIO chartered two new unions to contest the expelled unions for membership in their trade jurisdictions, the American Bakery and Confectionery Workers Union and the Laundry and Dry Cleaning International Union.* The AFL-CIO, however, did not attempt to challenge the IBT. As a result of the exposures, Congress enacted the Welfare and Pension Plan Disclosure Act of 1958 (which the AFL-CIO supported) and the Labor Management Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1959, which contained some adjustments of the Taft-Hartley Act long sought by organized labor but was generally considered anti-labor legislation.

Throughout its history the AFL-CIO has devoted much time, attention, and considerable financial resources to political affairs. Although rhetorically

pursuing the traditional nonpartisan political policy, under the guidance of its committee on political education, the AFL-CIO assumed considerable power and influence within the councils of the national Democratic party organization. From its founding until 1972, it endorsed Democratic presidential candidates exclusively. During these years the AFL-CIO strongly supported the social and labor reforms sought by the John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson administrations and consistently supported U.S. foreign policy, including the war in Southeast Asia. Breaking precedent in 1972, the AFL-CIO executive council refused to endorse the Democratic party candidacy of George S. McGovern. Nevertheless, several AFL-CIO affiliated unions ignored the injunction and supported the Democratic ticket. Beginning in 1973, the AFL-CIO executive council, under the resolute leadership of George Meany, launched a major effort to impeach President Richard M. Nixon, a campaign inspired at least partially by the Republican president's economic policies as well as his malfeasance in office.

During the early 1960s, the Negro American Labor Council,* an organization led by A. Philip Randolph which sought to end racial discrimination within the labor movement, brought pressure on the AFL-CIO leadership to eliminate discrimination in employment, to increase the advancement of blacks, and to encourage their entry into trades controlled by the AFL-CIO's various affiliated unions. Although they made consistent progress in these areas, AFL-CIO leaders encountered considerable criticism from reformers for failing to act quickly and forcefully enough. Nevertheless, the AFL-CIO leadership exhibited its commitment to racial justice through consistent support of the many civil-rights measures enacted during the 1960s.

The principal proponents and supporters of the AFL-CIO merger had hoped that the merged federation would lead a reinvigorated organizing drive, especially among the growing numbers of unorganized white-collar workers. Although it created an organizing department and led a major unionizing campaign, the AFL-CIO had only limited success among these workers, and, in fact, it lost almost as many workers to automation as it added to union rolls. AFL-CIO leaders also supported the organization of migratory and farm workers and contributed large sums of money to the United Farm Workers' Union* in its jurisdictional struggles with the powerful IBT.

Arguing that the AFL-CIO leadership was making neither a determined nor effective effort to organize either office workers or the workers in traditionally nonunion industries, the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America* (UAW), the largest AFL-CIO affiliate, withdrew from the federation on July 1, 1968. A year later, on May 26, 1969, the UAW joined with the IBT to establish the Alliance for Labor Action, an organization designed to correct the organizational and political shortcomings of the AFL-CIO. But the concord between the UAW and the IBT was at best an improbable affair, and except for an organizing effort in Atlanta, Georgia, the

alliance accomplished little and disintegrated shortly after Reuther's death in 1970. The alliance was formally dissolved in 1972.

More than any other single influence or personage, George Meany has dominated the first two decades of AFL-CIO history. Although he has little institutional power, Meany, through the force of personality, shrewd judgments of human character, and a gift for persuasion, quickly established himself as the unrivaled leader of the American labor movement, the first since the heyday of Samuel Gompers.

The AFL-CIO, which maintains its national headquarters in Washington, D.C., holds biennial conventions. Principal officers include a president, thirty-three vice-presidents, and a secretary-treasurer. The executive council is composed of the above officials. In 1973 the AFL-CIO reported a membership of 13,407,000 members located in 114 affiliated unions.

For further information, see the *AFL-CIO News* issued weekly and the *American Federationist* published monthly by the AFL-CIO. Accounts of the AFL-CIO merger can be found in Arthur Goldberg, *AFL-CIO Labor United* (1956); Philip Taft, *Organized Labor in American History* (1964), and the *A.F. of L. from the Death of Gompers to the Merger* (1959); and Joseph G. Rayback, *A History of American Labor* (1966). The best account of racketeering and corruption in the labor movement is John Hutchinson's *The Imperfect Union: A History of Corruption in American Trade Unions* (1970). Joseph C. Goulden's *Meany* (1972) provides many insights into the background and character of the controversial AFL-CIO president.

AMERICAN LABOR UNION (ALU). Developments in the American Labor movement following the formation of the American Federation of Labor* (AFL) in 1886 gradually convinced labor leaders in the West that their interests and needs were being ignored. Eastern trade unionists, who dominated and controlled the AFL and most of its major international union affiliates, seemed to have little understanding or concern about the problems encountered by the labor movement in the West. Such an attitude led the State Trade and Labor Council of Montana to withdraw from the AFL and suggest the organization of a separate federation. Meeting in the fall of 1897, the Montana labor council adopted resolutions calling for the creation of a western federation, and a short time later, delegates attending the Western Federation of Miners** (WFM) national convention endorsed the proposal. After canvassing other labor unions in the West to ascertain their feelings on the proposal, the WFM issued a call for a convention to meet in Salt Lake City on May 10, 1898; 119 delegates responded, and before adjourning, they founded the Western Labor Union (WLU).

The WLU was not conceived as a dual union movement, and affiliated unions were encouraged to maintain their membership in international labor

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

September 2, 2000

CITE: 36 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1999**LENGTH:** 880 words**HEADLINE:** The President's Radio Address**BODY:**

Good morning. On this Labor Day weekend, as we relax with our families, we honor the hard-working men and women who've helped build the strongest economy in our Nation's history. With more than 22 million new jobs, record surpluses, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, all Americans have a right to be proud.

~~But even at this time of unprecedented prosperity, millions of Americans still are working every day for the **minimum wage**. Today I want to talk about giving them a much deserved raise.~~

Every one of us knows someone who works for the **minimum wage** and often struggles to make ends meet. People like Cheryl Costas, a mother of four I met just a few months ago. Cheryl's from a small town in Pennsylvania. She works at a local convenience store for the **minimum wage** so she can support her four children and her disabled husband. As she said to me, \$ 5.15 an hour doesn't pay the bills. It doesn't put food on the table.

~~Seventy percent of all workers on the **minimum wage**, like Cheryl, are adults; almost 50 percent work full-time; 60 percent are women. In many cases, they are their family's sole breadwinners, struggling to raise their kids on \$ 10,700 a year. These hard-working Americans need a raise.~~

For more than 7 years now, our administration has sought to build an America that promotes responsibility and rewards work. That's why we nearly doubled the earned-income tax credit to cut taxes for millions of hard-pressed working parents; why we passed a children's tax credit for \$ 500 that 15 million Americans have taken advantage of; and why we provided for tax cuts for college tuition that 10 million families have taken advantage of; why we fought to pass the Family and Medical Leave Act that over 20 million Americans have taken advantage of to take a little time off when a baby is born or a parent is sick; why we've worked for better health care coverage and more child care coverage; and why, in 1996, I signed legislation to raise the **minimum wage** to \$ 5.15 an hour over 2 years.

It's long passed time we raised it again. In fact, more than a year-and-a-half ago, I proposed to raise the **minimum wage** by a dollar over 2 years. That's a modest increase that merely restores the **minimum wage** to what it was way back in 1982 in real dollar terms.

Still, that's no small change to more than 10 million Americans who work for the **minimum wage**. ~~For a full-time worker, it means another \$ 2,000 a year, enough for a family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay their rent check for 5.~~

But month after month, even with bipartisan support in Congress; the Republican leadership has sat on our proposal to raise the **minimum wage**, costing the average full-time worker more than a \$ 1,000 in lost wages. So far it's been the victim of every legislative maneuver in the congressional handbook, from poison-pill attachments to special interest strong-arming.

Some Republicans have even reverted to the same old attacks they used back in 1996, the last time we raised the **minimum wage**. Back then, they called the increase, and I quote, a "job killer" that would, quote, "lead to a juvenile crime wave of epic proportions." Well, my fellow Americans, the

only thing of epic proportions that's happened since 1996 has been the continued growth of our economy. Since we last raised the **minimum wage**, our economy has created more than 11 million new jobs, and juvenile crime has gone down every year. Study after study has shown that raising the **minimum wage** is not only the right thing to do for working families; it's the smart thing to do for our economy.

So my message to Congress is simple: Stop stalling. If the subject is tax breaks for the wealthy or legislative loopholes for special interest, this Congress moves with breathtaking speed. It's now time for the Republican leadership to stop riding the brakes on the **minimum wage**.

In the last week, with the election fast approaching, we've seen signs that some Republican leaders may be willing finally to work with us. So when they come back to Washington next week, I urge them to send me a **minimum wage** bill as the first order of business. It should also include a moderate tax cut package that everyone can agree on, without harmful provisions that would threaten overtime protections.

Once we secure the victory for hard-pressed working families, we can get to work on other pressing priorities -- on education, Social Security, Medicare, prescription drug coverage, a Patients' Bill of Rights, a middle class tax package including deductions for college tuition, and paying down the debt. Now, raising the **minimum wage** isn't just about dollars and cents; it's also about fundamental values: everybody counts; everyone's work should be rewarded; we all do better when we help each other.

America's workers have kept their end of the deal, and let's keep ours and honor Labor Day the right way, by giving working Americans the raise they have earned.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:05 p.m. on September 1 at a private residence in Cazenovia, NY, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

LOAD-DATE: October 24, 2000

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **atl 8 (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 12:59 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright](#) © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

July 29, 2000

CITE: 36 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1739**LENGTH:** 796 words**HEADLINE:** The President's Radio Address**BODY:**

Good morning. This weekend marks the start of the summer recess for Members of Congress. Many are heading home to their districts, and most Republicans are meeting in Philadelphia for their party's convention.

But wherever they go, I hope they will be thinking of the millions of Americans for whom summer vacations are not an option, the millions who work all summer long, all year long, earning no more than the **minimum wage**.

I want to talk to you today about giving these hard-pressed Americans a much-deserved raise and helping them to live the American dream. The face of the **minimum wage** is the face of America. Every one of us knows at least one person who works for **minimum wage**. It might be a member of your family. It might be the person who cares for your children during the day or serves you lunch at the shop on the corner or cleans your office every night.

Seventy percent of the workers on the **minimum wage** are adults; 60 percent are women; and almost 50 percent work fulltime. Many are their families' sole breadwinners, struggling to bring up their children on \$ 10,700 a year. These hard-working Americans need a raise. They deserve it. They've earned it.

~~I've always believed that if you work hard and play by the rules, you ought to have a decent chance for yourself and for a better life for your children. That's the promise I made when I first ran for President, and that's the basic bargain behind so much of what we've done in the years since, from expanding the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people to passing the Family and Medical Leave Act, from increased child care assistance to health care for children to helping millions and millions of Americans move from welfare to work.~~

That's also why, in 1996, we raised the **minimum wage** to \$ 5.15 an hour over 2 years. It's high time we did it again. In fact, it's long overdue.

More than a year ago now, I proposed to raise the **minimum wage** by \$ 1 over 2 years, a modest increase that merely restores the **minimum wage** to what it was back in 1982 in real dollar terms. Still, it's no small change. For a full-time worker, it would mean another \$ 2,000 a year -- \$ 2,000 more to pay for a child's college education, to cover critical health care, to pay the rent. And for a year now, the Republican leadership has sat on that proposal.

Back in 1996, the last time we raised the **minimum wage**, some of these same Republicans called it, and I quote, "a job killer cloaked in kindness." They said it would cause -- again, a quote -- "a juvenile crime wave of epic proportions." Well, time has not been kind to their predictions, and neither have the numbers. Our economy has created more than 11 million new jobs since we last raised the **minimum wage**. And study after study shows that a raise in the **minimum wage** is good not only for working families; it's good for our entire economy, especially at a time of labor shortages when we want to increase incentives for all Americans who can, to find work.

So this time, unlike the last time, the congressional majority knows better than to speak against

raising the **minimum wage**. This time, instead of arguing the facts, the leadership is playing legislative games, stalling action, and stifling debate. Already, these delays have cost the **minimum wage** worker more than \$ 900 in hard-earned pay. To paraphrase Shakespeare, they've come to bury the **minimum wage**, not to raise it.

For working Americans, the wait grows longer. As recently as this week, the majority in Congress was still talking about raising the **minimum wage**, but they couldn't bring themselves to actually do it. In the last hours before their recess, they were still working overtime to give tax breaks to the tiniest, wealthiest fraction of America's families and still doing nothing for the 10 million people who would benefit from a boost in the **minimum wage**.

This weekend Republican leaders gather in Philadelphia. From their seats inside the convention hall, I hope they'll stop a moment to think of Americans outside that hall -- Americans working in the restaurants, the shops, the hotels of Philadelphia, working hard for the **minimum wage**.

If Republican leaders really want to make their compassion count, they ought to join me in getting back to business and raising the **minimum wage**. I hope the majority will join the Democrats to seize this moment, to stop the delays, to work with me to help our working families.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:03 p.m. on July 28 in Room 606 at Barrington High School, Barrington, RI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

LOAD-DATE: September 12, 2000

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **atl 8 (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 12:59 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.](#)

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

March 8, 2000

CITE: 36 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 485**LENGTH:** 1430 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks on **Minimum Wage** Legislation**BODY:**

The President. Wasn't she great? I don't think the rest of us need to say much. [Laughter] I want to thank Senator Kennedy and Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, and all the Members of the House who are here with us today. I want to thank the members of the administration who are here, in addition to Mr. Podesta: Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, Gene Sperling, Deputy Labor Secretary Ed Montgomery. I thank the religious leaders who are here, including Reverend Paul Sherry, the former president of the United Church of Christ; the Reverend David Beckmann, the president of Bread for the World; and the other community leaders.

But most important of all, I want to thank Cheryl Costas for being here, because we're here today on behalf of her and so many people like her all across our country. People who work for the minimum wage often don't get a chance to see the White House. They don't have time to come, even for the public tours. They work hard every day. They stock our store shelves, wash dishes at our restaurants, clean our offices at night, care for our kids during the day. They're in every town and every city in our country. They're of every racial and ethnic and religious group. They have in common the minimum wage. And they need a raise, and as you saw, they deserve a raise.

We are here today to ask Congress to give it to them. Ever since I ran for President in 1992, I've had a vision of making our Nation a place where everyone -- everyone -- responsible enough to work for it could have a share of the American dream. Over the last 7 years, with the help of a lot of you here today, we've made a lot of headway toward that goal, turning the economy around and continuing the longest economic expansion in our history. I want to continue doing that.

I want us not to squander the surplus but to save Social Security and Medicare, to invest in education, and to pay our debt down. I also have tried very hard not just to generate jobs but to help people who are working hard for less. That's why we expanded the earned-income tax credit, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. That's why we passed the family and medical leave law, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. And that's why, with bipartisan support in 1996, we raised the minimum wage to \$ 5.15 an hour, over 2 years. And now it's time to do it again, to \$ 6.15 an hour.

We have bipartisan support again in Congress, but once again, the Republican leadership is trying to stop us. They know they can't win on the facts. Back in 1996 -- listen to what was said the last time we tried to raise the minimum wage. In 1996, Republican leaders said that a higher minimum wage, and I quote, "was a job killer cloaked in kindness." They warned that it would throw young minorities out of work and lead to -- listen to this -- a juvenile crime wave of epic proportions.

Time has not been kind to their predictions. [Laughter] Today I release a report from the National Economic Council that puts to rest any of the lingering myths about the minimum wage. Since the minimum wage was raised in 1996, our economy has created over 10 million new jobs. The unemployment rate is at its lowest point in 30 years. The employment of minority youth has gone up. Juvenile crime has gone down. We now have the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. We've cut the welfare rolls in half. And, thanks in part to the minimum wage increase, millions have moved from welfare to work and incomes for even the poorest Americans are rising for the first time in decades.

Now, that's what happened the last time we raised the minimum wage. There are no facts on which to base this opposition anymore. The new report I release today also dispels another myth about the minimum wage, that those who benefit are mostly middle class teenagers working for gas money. Cheryl probably feels a lot like me -- I wish I were still a middle class teenager working for gas money. [Laughter]

But the fact is that 70 percent of the people on the minimum wage are adults; 60 percent are women; and almost half work full-time. Many are the sole breadwinners, struggling to raise their children on \$ 10,700 a year. And I think Congress ought to think about them when this vote comes up.

Today, there are more than 10 million Americans like Cheryl working for \$ 5.15 an hour. You heard her say it's hard to live on that, especially if you have children. But no Americans who works full time should raise their children in poverty. This modest increase would simply restore the minimum wage to what it was in real dollar terms in 1982. People who are against this should have to confront that fact.

For a full-time worker, however, this would mean another \$ 2,000 a year. And if you're on the minimum wage, that's real money, enough money for a family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months.

This is the right thing to do for working families, the right thing to do for our economy, at a time when we've got labor shortages that will draw more people back into the labor market. Studies from Princeton to my own Council of Economic Advisers show that's exactly what happens when you raise the minimum wage: Increase the reward for work, and people who weren't looking for jobs decide to look and go to work.

There are a dozen good reasons to raise the minimum wage and not a single good argument against it. Even the Republican leadership understands that. So instead of arguing the facts, they're playing legislative sleight of hand. For example, they're now using the minimum wage as a vehicle to repeal worker protections and pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to save Social Security and Medicare and pay the debt down by 2013.

They also say they want to put this in over 3 years, not 2. That would mean \$ 900 less in wages for a full-time minimum wage worker. If Republican leaders send me a bill that makes workers wait for another year for their full pay raise and holds the minimum wage hostage for risky tax cuts that threaten our prosperity, I'll veto it.

It is time to stop nickel-and-diming the American working people out of the money that they need and deserve. This is just wrong. This is wrong. We have destroyed every single argument against raising the minimum wage. They're gone. All you've got now is legislative game playing; and it's wrong.

I want a clean, straightforward bill to raise the minimum wage by a dollar over 2 years, and I intend to sign it.

Let me say to all of you, I am profoundly grateful for the prosperity our Nation enjoys today, grateful for the opportunity that our administration has had to play a role in it. But I will never be satisfied as long as there are people like Cheryl out there. I mean, what else can you ask this woman to do? She's kept her family together. Her husband has a disability. She's supporting four kids. She's going to school full time. Now, how can Congress justify saying no to her?

That's what I want to know. Let's play games on another bill. They're going to pass a lot of other bills. Can't we put the working people of this country first for a change here and put political games second?

I'd like to now introduce to speak the first of a series of Members of Congress, without whom this fight could never be waged. And I am profoundly grateful to Representative David Bonior for nearly 25 years of fighting for people like Cheryl Costas.

Congressman Bonior.

[At this point, Members of Congress made brief remarks.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, all that needs to be said has been said. But what needs to be done has not been done. So I ask you to leave here remembering the stirring words of our leaders in Congress and the profoundly moving story of Cheryl Costas. And just remember, there's a lot more people like her out there. Remember what Dick Gephardt told you: Just ask every Member of Congress to imagine how long they could live on the minimum wage.

This is the right thing to do. We're still here after over 220 years because when the chips are down, we mostly do the right thing, in spite of ourselves. Ask them to do the right thing.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cheryl Costas, minimum wage earner, who introduced the President.

LOAD-DATE: April 4, 2000

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **headline (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 12:54 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright](#) © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

Draft 3/7/2000 2:20 p.m.
Glastris

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE
WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON, DC
March 8, 2000**

Acknowledgments: Rep. David Bonior; Rep. Patsy Mink; Cheryl Costas; Sec. Larry Summers;

We are here today, on this beautiful morning, in this glorious setting, on behalf of Americans like Cheryl Costas—people who don't often get a chance to see a place like this. ~~They are people who work hard every day, stocking store shelves, washing dishes at restaurants, cleaning our offices at night, and caring for our children during the day. They are in every town and city in America, and of every racial and ethnic group. But they have one thing in common: they earn the minimum wage--and they need a raise.~~ We're here today to call on Congress to give them one.

Ever since I ran for President back in 1992, I've had a vision of making our nation a place where everyone responsible enough to work for it could have a shot at the American Dream. And over the last seven years, with the help of a lot of people here today, we've made that vision a reality for millions of Americans. We turned the economy around with a new economic plan of fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in our people. And I believe we should continue down that path, by paying off the debt for the first time since 1835, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and investing in education, health care, and the environment. ~~We helped millions of working Americans escape poverty by expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit, and I've asked Congress to expand it again. We helped millions of working parents take time off to care for a newborn child or a sick loved one by passing family and medical leave, and I think we ought to expand the law to cover regular visits to schools, too.~~

And in 1996, with bipartisan support, we raised the minimum wage in two steps over two years, to \$5.15 an hour. Now it's time to raise it again, over two years, to \$6.15 an hour. Again we have bipartisan support in Congress. And ~~again~~, the Republican leadership is trying to stop us, only this time they know they can't win on the facts.

Back in 1996, Republican leaders said that a higher minimum wage was "a job killer cloaked in kindness." They warned that it would throw young minorities out of work and lead to a juvenile crime wave of "epic proportions."

Time has not been kind to their predictions. In fact, since we raised the minimum wage in 1996, the economy has created over 10 million new jobs. The unemployment rate has fallen to nearly its lowest point in 30 years. The employment rate of minority youth has gone up. Juvenile crime has gone down. We now have the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest African American and Hispanic unemployment rates on

COPY

record. We've cut the welfare rolls in half, and thanks in part to a higher minimum wage, millions have moved from welfare to work, and incomes are rising even for the poorest groups of Americans for the first time in decades. And last month, we achieved the longest period of economic growth in our entire history.

But even as our economy breaks records, too many Americans are still having trouble breaking even. Because the fact is, you can't live on \$5.15 an hour, and too many families are forced to try.

Today, I am releasing a new report from my Council of Economic Advisers. It shows that over 16 million Americans earn at or near the minimum wage. These are not as opponents used to argue, mostly middle-class teenagers working for gas money. Seventy percent are adults. Sixty percent are women. Almost half work full time. And many are sole breadwinners struggling to raise their children on \$10,700 a year.

No American who works full time should live in poverty. That's why it is vital that we raise the minimum wage by \$1 an hour over the next two years. This modest increase would simply restore the real value of the minimum wage to what it was in 1982. But for a full-time worker, it would mean an extra \$2,000 a year. That's real money—enough for a family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months.

Raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do for low-income families. And it's the smart thing to do for our economy. At a time when businesses are suffering labor shortages, the surest way to maintain high growth with low inflation is to bring more workers into the job market. Studies show that that is precisely what happens when you raise the minimum wage.

There are a dozen good reasons to raise the minimum wage, and not a single one not to. Even the Republican leadership understands that. So instead of arguing the facts, they're playing legislative slight-of-hand. For instance, they're using the minimum wage bill as a vehicle to repeal worker protections and pass irresponsible tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline and jeopardize our ability to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security and pay down the debt by 2013. If they pass such a bill, I will veto it.

They're also pushing to delay the minimum wage increase over three years. That would mean \$900 less in wages for a full-time worker making the minimum wage. If they pass such a bill, I will veto it.

It's time for Republican leaders in Congress to stop their shell games. Stop nickle and diming American workers out of the dollar-an-hour raise they deserve. Send me a clean, straightforward bill to raise the minimum wage by one dollar over two years—and I'll sign it.

I'll sign it because it is right for America, and right for people like Cheryl Costas—hard-working Americans trying to keep body and soul together. They deserve

No we went to talk speech

our admiration, and our support. And never have we been in a better position to provide that support.

I am deeply grateful for the historic prosperity we enjoy. But our nation cannot live up to its full potential until every American willing to work for it have a chance to share in that prosperity. Raising the minimum wage is an important step to making that happen. Now, I want to introduce someone who has been fighting for working Americans for tk years in Congress, Rep. David Bonior.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

August 20, 1996

CITE: 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1472**LENGTH:** 2340 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks on Signing the Small Business Job Protection Act of 1996**BODY:**

Thank you very much. Cathy, it may be your birthday, but I would say that everybody here feels that you have given us a great gift today by reminding us about what this is all about. And we wish you and your fine children well. And I don't think being in the band will hurt them a bit. I'm glad you're going to do that. [Laughter]

I want to thank the members of our administration who are here: Secretary Reich, Small Business Administrator Phil Lader, and others. I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here, especially Senator Kennedy who, himself, probably broke the wage and hour laws by working so hard to pass this bill. If we'd been paying him by the hour, we'd be underpaying him in the last year. Thank you very much.

There are a lot of people who worked hard on this bill who aren't here: Senator Daschle, Congressman Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, Congressman Clay, in particular did. I want to join with others and thank the countless labor unions who have championed this bill, led by the truly tireless John Sweeney.

I'd like to remind the American people of something, because sometimes our unions are criticized for looking out for their members too much. There are very few unions in America that have **minimum wage** workers. Most of these unions did this because they thought it was the right thing to do. They spent their time and their money and their energy trying to help other people who do not belong to their organizations, and I thank you for that.

I'd like to thank the religious groups, the economists, the business people who have made this their cause of concern. Again, I thank the Members, including members of both parties, who supported this legislation.

I'll say more in a moment about the rest of the bill, but let me just begin by saying this is a truly remarkable piece of legislation. It is pro-work, pro-business, and pro-family; it raises the **minimum wage**; it helps small businesses in a number of ways that I will explain in a moment, including retirement and incentive to invest; and it promotes adoption in two very sweeping ways that have long needed to be done in the United States. This is a cause for celebration for all Americans of all parties, all walks of life, all faiths. This bill represents the very best in our country.

It will give 10 million Americans, as Cathy said, a chance to raise stronger families and build better futures. By coming together across lines that have too often divided us and finding common ground, we have made this a real season of achievement for the people of America.

At its heart, this bill does reaffirm our most profoundly American values, offering opportunity to all, demanding responsibility from all, and coming together as a community to do the right thing. This bill says to the working people of America: If you're willing to take responsibility and go to work, your work will be honored. We're going to honor your commitment to your family. We're going to recognize that \$ 4.25 an hour is not enough to raise a family.

It's harder and harder to raise children today and harder and harder for people to succeed at home

and at work. And I have said repeatedly, over and over again to the American people: We must not force our families to make a choice. Most parents have to work. We have a national interest in seeing that our people can succeed at home where it counts the most in raising their children, and succeed at work so they'll have enough income to be able to succeed at home. We must do both, and this bill helps us achieve that goal.

These 10 million Americans will become part of America's economic success story. A success story that in the last 4 years has led us to 900,000 new construction jobs; a record number of new businesses started, including those owned by women and minorities; a deficit that is the smallest it's been since 1981, and 60 percent less than it was when I took office; 10 million new jobs; 12 million American families who have been able to take advantage of family and medical leave; almost 4 1/2 million new homeowners and 10 million other Americans who refinanced their homes at lower mortgage rates. And, most importantly of all, perhaps, real hourly wages, which fell for a decade, have finally begun to rise again. America is on the move.

But our challenge, my fellow Americans, is to make sure that every American can reap the rewards of a growing economy, every American has the tools to make the most of his or her own life, to build those strong families and to succeed at home and at work. As the Vice President said, the first step was taken in 1993 with the passage of the family and medical leave law and with the earned-income tax credit, which cut taxes for 15 million working families. Today, that earned-income tax credit is worth about \$ 1,000 to a family of four with an income under \$ 28,000 a year.

Well, today we complete the second half of that effort. Together with our tax cut for working families, this bill ensures that a parent working full time at the **minimum wage** can lift himself or herself and their children out of poverty. Nobody who works full time with kids in the home should be in poverty. If we want to really revolutionize America's welfare system and move people from welfare to work and reward work, that is the first, ultimate test we all have to meet. If you get up every day and you go to work, and you put in your time and you have kids in your home, you and your children will not be in poverty.

We have some hard working **minimum wage** people here today supporting Cathy. Let me tell you about them: 70 percent of them are adults, 6 of 10 are working women, and for them, work is about more than a paycheck, it's about pride. They want a wage they can raise their families on. By raising the **minimum wage** by 90 cents, this bill, over 2 years, will give those families an additional \$ 1,800 a year in income, enough to buy 7 months of groceries, several months of rent, or child care, or as Cathy said, to pay all of the bills from the utilities in the same month.

For many, this bill will make the difference between their ability to keep their families together and their failure to do so. These people reflect America's values, and it's a lot harder for them than it is for most of us to go around living what they say they believe in. It's about time they got a reward, and today they'll get it.

I would also like to say a very special word of thanks to the business owners, especially the small-business owners who supported this bill. Many of the **minimum wage** employers I talk to wanted to pay their employees more than 4.25 an hour and would be happy to do so as long as they can do it without hurting their businesses, and that means their competitors have to do the same thing. This bill will allow them to compete and win, to have happier, more productive employees, and to know they're doing the right thing. For all of those small businesses, I am very, very appreciative.

I would also like to say that this bill does a remarkable number of things for small businesses. In each of the last 3 years, our Nation has set a new record in each succeeding year in the number of new businesses started. And we know that most of the new jobs in America are being created by small- and medium-sized businesses. In 1993, I proposed a \$ 15,000 increase in the amount of capital a small business can expense, to spark the kind of investment that they need to create jobs. Well, in 1993 we only won half that increase, but today I'll get to sign the second half into law, and I thank the Congress for passing that, as well.

As the Vice President said, this bill also includes a work-opportunity tax credit to provide jobs for the most economically disadvantaged working Americans, including people who want to move from welfare to work. Now, there will be a tightly drawn economic incentive for people to hire those folks and give them a chance to enter the work force, as well. It extends the research tax credit to help businesses stay competitive in the global economy. It extends a tax incentive for businesses to train and educate their employees. That's good news for people who need those skills, and it's good news for America because we have to have the best educated work force in the world in the 21st century.

This legislation does even more to strengthen small business by strengthening the families that make them up. It helps millions of more Americans to save for their own retirement. It makes it much easier for small businesses to offer pension plans by creating a new small business 401(k) plan. It also lets more Americans keep their pensions when they change jobs without having to wait a year before they can start saving at their new jobs. As many as 10 million Americans without pensions today could now earn them as a result of this bill.

I'm delighted we are joined today, among others, by Shawn Marcell, the CEO of Prima Facie, a fast-growing video monitoring company in Pennsylvania, which now has just 17 employees, but that's a lot more than he started with. He stood with me in April and promised that if we kept our word and made pensions easier and cheaper for small businesses like his, he'd give pensions to all of his employees. Today, he has told us he's making good on that pledge. I'd like him to stand up, and say I predict that thousands more will follow Shawn's lead. Thank you, Shawn. Please stand up. Let's give him a hand. God bless you, sir. [Applause] Thank you.

I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to our SBA Administrator, Phil Lader, and to the White House Conference on Small Business. When the White House Conference on Small Business met, they said one of their top priorities was increasing the availability and the security of pensions for small-business owners in America. This is a good thing. It is also pro-work, pro-family, and pro-business.

Finally, this bill does something else that is especially important to me and to Hillary, and I'm glad she's here with us today. It breaks down the financial and bureaucratic barriers to adoption, giving more children what every child needs and deserves, loving parents and a strong, stable home.

Two weeks ago, we had a celebration for the American athletes who made us so proud in Atlanta at the centennial Olympics. Millions of Americans now know that one of them, the Decathlon Gold Medalist Dan O'Brien, speaks movingly about having been an adopted child and how much the support of his family meant in his life. Right now, there are tens of thousands of children waiting for the kind of family that helped to make Dan O'Brien an Olympic champion. At the same time, there are thousands of middle class families that want to bring children into their homes but cannot afford it. We're offering a \$ 5,000 tax credit to help bring them together. It gives even more help to families that will adopt children with disabilities or take in two siblings, rather than seeing them split up. And lastly, this bill ends the long standing bias against interracial adoption which has too often meant an endless, needless wait for America's children.

You know, as much as we talk about strong, loving families, it's not every day that we here in Washington get to enact a law that literally creates them or helps them stay together. This is such a day. Although he can't be with us today, I also want to thank Dave Thomas, himself adopted, who went on to found Wendy's and do so much for our country. Perhaps more than any other American citizen, he has made these adoption provisions possible, and we thank him.

Lastly, I'd like to point out that we do have some significant number of adoptive families here with us today, including some who are on the stage. And so I'd just like to acknowledge the Weeks family, the Wolfington family, the Outlaw family, the Fitzwater family, and ask them and anyone else here from the adoptive family community to stand up who'd like to stand. We'd like to recognize you and thank you for being here. Thank you all for being here. Thank you.

Beside me, or in front of me now, is the desk used by Frances Perkins, Franklin Roosevelt's labor

secretary and the very first woman ever to serve in the Cabinet. She was one of our greatest labor secretaries. It was from her desk that many of America's pioneering wage, hour, and workplace laws originated, including the very first 25 cent an hour **minimum wage** signed into law by President Roosevelt in 1938.

Secretary Perkins understood that a living wage was about more than feeding a family or shelter from a storm. A living wage makes it possible to participate in what she called the culture of community, to take part in the family, the community, the religious life we all cherish. Confident in our ability to provide for ourselves and for our children, secure in the knowledge that hard work does pay. A **minimum wage** increase, portable health care, pension security, welfare to work opportunities, that's a plan that's putting America on the right track.

Now, we have to press forward, giving tax cuts for education and childrearing and child care, buying a first home, finishing that job of balancing the budget without violating our obligations to our parents and our children and the disabled and health care, to education and the environment and to our future. That's a plan that will keep America on the right track, building strong families and strong futures by working together.

For everyone here who played a role in this happy day, I thank you, America thanks you, and our country is better because of your endeavors.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Catherine Wilkinson, an employee of West Virginia Northern Community College, who introduced the President, and John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO. H.R. 3448, approved August 20, was assigned Public Law No. 104-188.

LOAD-DATE: October 08, 1996

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **atl 8 (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 1:01 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright](#) © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

REVISED

18629255

LA 006

PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON

REMARKS ON MINIMUM WAGE BILL-SIGNING

SOUTH LAWN

August 20, 1996

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

8/20/96

96 AUG 20 AID : 16

*After for success
at home & abroad*

COPY

I also thank Leader Daschle, Leader Gephardt, Congressman Bonior, and Congressman Clay, who could not be with us today; the countless labor unions that have championed this bill, led by the truly tireless John Sweeney; and the many religious groups, economists, and business people that have made this cause their concern.

It is with great satisfaction that I will sign this bill to raise the minimum wage -- to give ten million Americans a chance to raise stronger families, and build better futures.

By coming together across the lines that too often divide us -- by finding this crucial common ground -- we have made this a real season of achievement for the American people.

At its heart, this bill affirms the most profoundly American values: offering opportunity to all. Demanding responsibility from all. And coming together as a community to do what is right.

This bill says to the working people of America: if you're willing to take that responsibility, we're going to honor your hard work. We're going to honor your commitment to your family. We're going to recognize that \$4.25 an hour isn't enough to raise that family. Our hardest-pressed families need and deserve this raise. All Americans know this is the right thing to do.

Our economic strategy has given us growth that is both steady and strong. We now make more autos than Japan. We have 900,000 new construction jobs. There is a record number of businesses owned by women.

We have cut the deficit by more than half -- and it is now the smallest it has been since 1981. Our economy has created over ten million jobs. And real hourly wages, which fell for a decade, are on the rise again.

Our challenge is to help every American reap the rewards of a changing, expanding economy. When I came into office, I had a plan to ensure that no parent who works hard and plays by the rules would have to raise their children in poverty. The first step was cutting taxes for fifteen million working families in 1993.

Today, we complete the second half of that effort.

Together with our tax cut for working families, this bill ensures that a parent working full-time at the minimum wage can lift themselves and their children out of poverty.

Look around me. These are some of the hardest-working people in America -- with some of the strongest values in America. Seventy percent of minimum wage earners are adults, and six out of ten are working women. To them, work is about more than a paycheck. It is about their pride as well. They want a wage they can raise their families on.

By raising the minimum wage by 90 cents, this bill gives those families an additional \$1,800 a year -- enough to buy seven months of groceries, or several months of rent or child care. For many, this bill will make the difference that keeps their family together.

I want to offer a special word of gratitude to the businesses and small business owners who supported this bill. Many of the minimum wage employers I talk to want to pay more than \$4.25 an hour, and know they can do it without hurting their businesses -- as long as their competitors do it at the same time. This bill will allow them to do that.

It also includes a number of measures to help the small businesses that are the greatest engines of growth in this economy.

In 1993, I proposed a \$15,000 increase in the amount of capital that a small business can expense, to spark the kind of investment that creates growth and jobs. We won half that increase in 1993, and today, I will sign the second half into law. This bill also creates a new Work Opportunity Tax Credit, to provide jobs for the most economically-disadvantaged working Americans. *will help more people to work*

It extends the research tax credit, to help businesses stay competitive in a fast-moving economy. And it extends a tax incentive for businesses that train and educate their employees. That's good news for the people who need those skills -- and it's good news for a country that needs the best-educated workforce to seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

This legislation does even more to strengthen families, by helping millions more Americans to save for their own retirements. This bill makes it dramatically easier for small businesses to offer pension plans, by creating a new small business 401(k) plan.

It also lets more Americans keep their pensions when they change jobs, without having to wait a year before they can start saving at their new job.

As many as ten million Americans without pensions today could now earn them as a result of this bill. And I am delighted that we are joined by Shawn Marcell, the C.E.O. of Prima Facie, a fast-growing video monitoring company in Pennsylvania, which now has seventeen employees. Shawn stood with me in April, and promised that if kept our word and made pensions easier and cheaper for small businesses like his, he would give pensions to all of his employees.

Today, he has told us that he is making good on that pledge. [ASK SHAWN TO STAND.] I predict that thousands of small business owners will follow his extraordinary example.

Finally, this bill does something that is very important to me, and to Hillary. It breaks down the financial and bureaucratic barriers to adoption, giving more children what every child needs and deserves: loving parents, and a strong, stable home.

Two weeks ago, we held a celebration for the American athletes who made us so proud in Atlanta. One of them, gold medalist Dan O'Brien, speaks *many adopting families* *today - Dan* *in State* movingly about being adopted, and how much the support of his family has meant in his life. Right now, there are tens of thousands of children waiting for the kind of family that made such a difference to Dan. At the same time, there are thousands of middle class families that want to bring a child into their homes, but cannot afford it. We're offering a \$5,000 tax credit, to help bring them together. It gives even more help to families that adopt children with disabilities, or take in two siblings rather than splitting them up.

Finally, this bill ends the longstanding bias against interracial adoption, which often means an endless, needless wait for children. As much as we talk about strong, loving families, it is not every day that we enact a law that literally creates them. I'm proud that this is such a day. And although he cannot be with us today, I want to thank Dave Thomas, adopted himself, who went on to found Wendy's and do so much for our country. He, more than anyone, has made this day possible.

Beside me is the desk used by Frances Perkins -- the first woman cabinet member, and one of our nation's greatest secretaries of labor.

It was from this desk that many of America's pioneering wage, hour, and workplace laws originated -- including the very first 25-cent minimum wage, signed into law by President Roosevelt in 1938.

Secretary Perkins understood that a living wage was about more than feeding a family, or shelter from a storm. A living wage makes it possible to participate in what she called the "culture of community" -- to take part in the family, community, and religious life we all cherish -- confident in our ability to provide for ourselves and our children, secure in the knowledge that hard work does pay.

A minimum wage increase. Portable health care.
Pension security. Welfare to work. That's the plan that
is putting America's on the right track.

Now we must press forward -- giving tax cuts for
education, child-rearing, and buying a first home -- and
finishing the job of balancing the budget. That's the
plan that will keep America on the right track, moving
forward.

By signing this bill, I have the honor of granting a raise to ten million Americans, and honoring their hard work, their responsibility, their dreams for their families. It is in their name that I lift this pen, and give America's new minimum wage the force of law.

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

July 9, 1996

CITE: 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 1217**LENGTH:** 1954 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks on Senate Action on **Minimum Wage** Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters**BODY:**

The President. Good afternoon. This was a very good day for America's working families. Today's vote by the Senate means that 10 million hard-working Americans will get a little bit of help to raise their children and keep their family strong. A 90-cent increase in the minimum wage will honor our most basic values, work and family, opportunity and responsibility. It will help working people without hurting our economy, and it is plainly the right thing to do.

Today the minimum wage is not a living wage. You can't raise a family on \$ 4.25 an hour. This action by the Senate today restores the bipartisan commitment that the minimum wage will keep pace with the cost of living. This action will directly benefit millions of hard-working Americans.

Sixty percent of minimum wage workers are women. More than a third are the sole breadwinners in their household. Over 2 million children live in poor or near-poor families where a worker earns the minimum wage. And they will now get a raise.

I'm gratified that a bipartisan majority of the Senators rejected a killer amendment that would have stopped this bill. The provision would have been a powerful incentive for employers to push employees out of their jobs after 6 months. It would have locked millions and millions of Americans into lower wages.

The way has now been cleared for final passage of a minimum wage bill. I call on Congress to send me the final bill quickly. The differences between the House and Senate versions are not significant. An American worker should get their raise as soon as possible. There's no reason that minimum wage workers should have to wait any longer for their raise. This is not a time to nickel and dime our working families. Our economy is sturdy; we have 10 million new jobs; unemployment at 5.3 percent; nearly 4 million new homeowners; rising real hourly wages for the first time in a decade. Now we have to make sure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from a growing economy.

This has been a difficult fight. But it turned out to be a real victory for the working families of this country. Today's vote by the Senate will make it possible for more of our people to be rewarded for their hard work, to believe that there is opportunity on the other end of their responsibility.

Again, I thank the Members of the Senate who took this step. I thank the Members of the Congress, both parties, who supported it in both Houses. I look forward to the speedy resolution of the two bills and to signing it into law.

Let me say one other thing. Today is a special day for me, and since the Vice President's here, I wanted to announce that this is our fourth anniversary. It was 4 years ago today that I asked and he accepted the -- I asked him to become Vice President, or at least the nominee for Vice President, and he accepted it. It has been 4 years of great adventure. It's been a wonderful partnership. And I believe that historians will record that he has been the most effective and influential Vice President in the history of the country. And I just wanted to have this chance to acknowledge 4 great years and to thank him for his remarkable service and his steadily improving sense of humor. [Laughter]

Budget Legislation

Q. How do you feel about a CR that runs through March, sir?

The President. A CR to do what?

Q. [Inaudible] -- at runs through March at fiscal -- [inaudible].

The President. Well, I would hope we could get some of the appropriations bill passed. My understanding is that there are some that we're pretty close to an agreement on. And I would hope that we could keep working into September after we have the August recess to see what else can be done.

There's still a lot of things that need to be done. We need to pass Kennedy-Kassebaum. We need to pass a good welfare reform bill. And I'm still open to any kind of progress we can make on the budget. So I will work with the Congress in any way possible. We have to keep the Government open, and we have to keep the fundamental functions of the country going forward. But I would hope that we wouldn't give up this early on the prospect of progress.

Minimum Wage and Former Senator Dole

Q. Mr. President, former Senator Dole's press secretary says you're playing maximum politics with the minimum wage, yet you were silent for the first 2 years of your administration on the increase of the minimum wage and that he has supported an increase in the minimum wage. Are you playing politics with the minimum wage?

The President. Does that mean that he's changed his position, and he now supports this minimum wage increase?

Q. He says he supports -- as of May 24, 1996, he was in support of the minimum wage, according to the Congressional Record and the press release that they put out.

The President. Well, good for him. That's good.

The Vice President. With or without the poison pill?

The President. I mean, if he is now in support of this bill, I hope he will say so and urge the leadership in the Senate and the House of his party to send me the bill right away. And I think the American people should say that we're glad he supports the bill. If in fact he changed his position in May to support it, I think it's good.

Let me say, I never opposed -- the implication that I, like Senator Dole and the Republican leadership, opposed the minimum wage increase in the first 2 years is simply false. Let's remember, though, we did first things first. The first thing we did was to double the earned-income tax credit, so that we could say over a period of years we were going to take all working families who work 40 hours a week who had children in the home out of poverty. That was a very important thing to do on its own merits. And that took a lot of doing. That took virtually all of 1993. It was an important part of our economic plan, and it was opposed by all the Members of the other party in the Congress. So we focused on the earned-income tax credit in the first 2 years.

The change of parties in the '94 election had nothing whatever to do with raising the minimum wage. When I ran in 1992. I said I thought we ought to take action to keep the minimum wage up with inflation. And it hadn't been raised in 5 years; it needs to be raised.

1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, on this anniversary it seems only fair to ask you when you plan to officially announce what has clearly been your intention all along here, to seek reelection?

The President. I don't know. [Laughter] I don't know. We haven't made a decision about an official announcement. I can tell you this, that I'm going to try to keep my team together. I hope that we'll -- I'm hoping for an eighth anniversary. How's that?

Small Business and the Minimum Wage

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to small business owners who say they'll have to lay off workers if the minimum wage is increased?

The President. I would say two things. First of all -- first, in 1993, when we made 90 percent of the small businesses in this country eligible for a tax cut by increasing the expensing provisions by 70 percent, and again in this minimum wage bill, there are tax relief provisions for small businesses, a number of them which will actually put more money into the hands of small businesses. So that this -- even the most hard-pressed small businesses should not be adversely affected by this.

Secondly, there have been study after study after study showing -- the vast majority of the studies show that a moderate increase in the minimum wage, especially in a strong economy, does not increase the unemployment rate. We have produced over 10 million new jobs as a country in the last 3 1/2 years. But the people who are still out there working for \$ 4.25 an hour can't live on it. And it is simply a myth to say that most people on the minimum wage are middle class kids living at home with their parents.

I was in Chicago the other day, and some of you probably were with me at that Taste of Chicago event. And I went to one of the food booths, and there was a woman there who said, "I really appreciate you trying to raise the minimum wage. I'm a single mother with two children working full time on the minimum wage and going to school at night. And it's just not true that we're all living in comfortable circumstances. Most people are having a tough time like me."

And that's what I think the answer is. This country has been well-served over a long period of time by having a minimum wage that guaranteed a decent level of subsistence. And remember this, these are people that virtually have to spend everything they make. And when they earn more money, they will turn fight around and spend it with small businesses all across the country. They'll spend it at those eating establishments. They'll spend it at the dry cleaners and the places that do laundry. They'll spend it on supporting their children. And therefore, they will be lifting the American economy up, and they'll be helping a lot of small businesses, too.

The Vice President. Could I say something? Could I add a word since in view of the occasion I feel it's okay to interject one word here. I remember when we started this fight. I believe it was the Jim Lehrer show went and asked the question you just asked --

The President. I remember that.

The Vice President. -- to employees who are making the minimum wage. And you know, they're the ones who really ought to give the answer. And I remember vividly one woman in southern Virginia who was making the minimum wage, was asked by the reporter, what about this argument that if they increase your minimum wage X amount, your employer might reduce the number of jobs in your workplace. She thought just for a minute and looked at him straight in the eye and she said, "I'll take my chances."

And that's the way people who were making the minimum wage feel about this question. And the studies indicate that they're right, especially in today's economy.

Helms-Burton Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you plan to implement -- [inaudible] -- Helms-Burton legislation that would allow lawsuits to move forward?

The President. Would you say that again, please?

Q. Do you plan to implement title 3 of the Helms-Burton legislation which is due on July 16th to allow those lawsuits to move forward?

The President. I'm sorry, I have not made a determination on that. That has not come to me for a determination yet, so I can't comment.

Let me -- before I leave, I also want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime friend Secretary Belch, who has carried on this fight for the minimum wage and for a minimum wage that would not be crippled by exempting millions and millions of workers from its impact. And so this was an especially sweet day for him as well, and I thank him for his efforts. And I thank you again, all of you, for being here. This is a great day for our working families.

Thank you.

Assault Weapons Ban

Q. Mr. President, what's your response to Dole's statement on assault weapons?

The President. Let me say, I'm not entirely sure what he meant when he said what he said. My position is clear. I fought for and passed the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, the 100,000 police. If he now believes that we were right on that, then I applaud that. But it's not clear to me that that's what he said. So I can't comment on what he said because I'm not sure what he said.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

LOAD-DATE: August 27, 1996

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **headline (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 12:54 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

[Copyright](#) © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.

EF

17820255
LAD06

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
REMARKS ON THE MINIMUM WAGE
BRIEFING ROOM**

July 9, 1996

THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN
7-9-96

COPY

This is a very good day for America's working families. Today's vote by the Senate means that ~~the bill~~ *10 million, hard-working Americans will get a raise* ~~_____~~ A 90 cent increase *a little bit of help to raise their children + keep their families strong.* in the minimum wage will honor our most basic values:

work and family, opportunity and responsibility. It will help working people without hurting our economy. It is the right thing to do.

Today, the minimum wage is not a living wage. You can't raise a family on \$4.25 an hour. This restores the bipartisan commitment that the minimum wage will keep pace with the cost of living.

This action will directly benefit millions of hardworking Americans. 60% of minimum wage workers are women. More than a third are the sole breadwinners in their households. Over 2 million children live in poor or near-poor families where a worker will now get a raise.

I am gratified that a bipartisan majority of the Senators rejected a killer amendment that would have stopped this bill. This provision would have been a powerful incentive for employers to push employees out of their jobs after six months. It would have locked millions of Americans into lower real wages.

The way has now been cleared to final passage of a minimum wage increase. I call on Congress to send me a final bill quickly so American workers can get their raise as soon as possible. There is no reason minimum wage workers should have to wait any longer for their raise. It is no time to "nickel and dime" working families.

Our economy is now the sturdiest it has been in decades. We have seen 10 million new jobs, the unemployment rate at 5.3%, 3.7 million new homeowners, and rising real hourly wages for the first time in a decade. Now we must make sure that all Americans have the opportunity to share the benefits of our growing economy.

This has been a tough fight, but working families have won a remarkable victory. Today's vote by the Senate will make it possible for more of our people to reap the rewards of hard work. Again, I thank the members of the Senate who took this step, and I look forward to signing it into law.

#

Public Papers of the Presidents

Public Papers of the Presidents

May 8, 1996

CITE: 32 Weekly Comp. Pres. Doc. 810**LENGTH:** 2877 words**HEADLINE:** Remarks on the Legislative Agenda and an Exchange With Reporters**BODY:***Legislative Agenda*

The President. Good afternoon. Today I want to make a brief statement about the work that Congress and I can do together in the next 90 days. The next 3 months can be a time when we sign into law measures that will truly help us to meet our challenges, protect our values, and move our country forward together.

But right now, Congress is facing a logjam. The Democrats and I believe we must raise the **minimum wage**, which is nearing a 40 year low. The Republicans want a temporary reduction in the gas tax. There's only one fair way to break this logjam. Congress should pass the **minimum wage** increase clean, and if Republicans want a temporary reduction in the gas tax, then Congress should pass that clean. That is how we can break the logjam and then get on with the other crucial work at hand.

There's still time for us to balance the budget while protecting our basic values. We can reform welfare, cut taxes, double the size of our border patrol, and make sure our people are able to keep their health insurance if they change jobs or if someone in the family gets sick. All this legislation is ready to go right now. Much of it passed with broad support and by large margins. All Congress has to do is send it to me, and we'll be in business. But Congress must send it to me clean.

I'm very concerned by reports that some Republicans in Congress want to ruin these good, bipartisan bills by attaching to them bad proposals that shouldn't be there in the first place. They want to load the bills up with poison pills, measures the Republicans are inserting in the legislation to make sure I will veto it, so they can pretend it's not just the poison pill I'm against, but the bill itself.

For example, they know I would sign a welfare reform bill if they sent it to me by itself. But they're determined to link welfare reform to Medicaid changes that cut coverage to children, to pregnant women, to the elderly, and to families with children with disabilities. Or they link it to a tax increase on working people by cutting the earned-income tax credit.

They do that in hopes of provoking a veto, so they can run negative ads in the fall accusing me of being against welfare reform. That's what I mean by poison pill. It may be good politics, but it's not good for the American people.

So I urge Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich and the Republicans in Congress: Keep the legislation free of poison pills. I say to Republicans in Congress: Work with me to pass welfare reform, a balanced budget, a tax cut, an increase in the **minimum wage**, health care and immigration reform, without inserting deadly, poison-pill provisions. Join me in 3 months of progress, not 3 months of partisanship.

Let me be clear. If we want a balanced budget, pass it without the poison pill of cutting education or the environment. If we want welfare reform, pass it without the poison pill of cutting the earned-income tax credit and thereby raising taxes on working families, without the poison pill of

ending guaranteed Medicaid coverage for poor children, pregnant women, the elderly, or families with children with disabilities. If we want health insurance reform, leave out the poison pill of nationwide, unrestricted, permanent medical savings accounts. If we want to raise the **minimum wage**, do it without the poison pill of undermining workers' rights. If we want immigration reform, pass it without the poison pill that slams shut the schoolhouse door in the face of innocent children.

Finally, I ask the Republicans in Congress to consider something else. This is the first time your party has controlled both Houses of Congress at the same time since 1954. What is the record you will present to the American people and leave for history? When you have worked with me in a bipartisan fashion, we have done positive things for the American people: a fine telecommunications bill; tough anti-terrorism legislation; honest lobbying reform; a budget that gives our country its 4th straight year of deficit reduction while protecting education, the environment, Medicare, and Medicaid. Will this be the record we build on, or will you go your own way again, leaving the American people with a memory of extremism, deadlock, and Government shutdowns?

It's no secret to anybody that this is an election year, but there will be plenty of time for all the politics in the world after we do the work we were sent here to do. So let us treat these next 3 months as the end of the legislative session and not as the beginning of the election season.

Senator Dole and Speaker Gingrich and the Republicans in Congress, I ask you to abandon the strategy of veto in favor of making this a season of progress.

Gas Tax

Q. Now, you know that your statement will be taken as a very political one, but are you really saying that you will sign a bill to repeal the tax cut if it doesn't have the **minimum wage**, or will you veto it otherwise?

The President. What I'm saying is that we have a logjam here. I believe the price of fuel should come down, and I believe it will come down. The price of oil has dropped about \$ 3 a barrel since I announced the modest release from the petroleum reserve and the Energy Department announced its actions, and then, independently, the Justice Department announced its actions. There is still some backlog in the refinery capacity, and that's going to take some time for it to manifest itself in prices at the pump.

But if they want a temporary reduction in the gas tax, the way to do it is to end the logjam, give us a clean vote on the **minimum wage** increase. We should increase the **minimum wage** and pass their temporary reduction of the gas tax. But you know, raising the **minimum wage** is very important to a lot of us and, more importantly, it's very important to millions and millions of working Americans.

And we have got a logjam here, so I have once again come forward and said, "Okay, I'm willing to do my part to break the logjam. Let's do both." And that's the right thing to do.

1996 Election

Q. You seem to be asking the Republicans to put aside politics for 3 months. Will you ask the Democratic National Committee not to run the highly negative ads against Senator Dole that it has been running, and say that no Clinton/Gore money will be spent on these types of negative ads?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not asking the Republican Committee or Senator Dole to refrain from politics. I'm not asking him not to make his speeches. I'm not asking him to refrain from differentiating himself from me. I'm not asking them to refrain from raising and spending money any way they choose, although I do think we should pass a campaign finance reform bill.

So I'm not asking them to do that. They may do whatever they choose. I'm saying is, when we have worked together in a bipartisan fashion, we've gotten progress. We now have huge, broad areas of agreement here. And I have never let the areas of this agreement affect my willingness to work with

them to achieve agreement. And that's all I'm asking them to take the same position.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, I'm not sure we got an answer to Helen's [Helen Thomas, United Press International] first question, and that is, would you sign a repeal of the gas tax if there were no increase in the **minimum wage**? And aren't you just doing the same kind of linkage that you have said Republicans shouldn't do all along, even as far back as the Government shutdowns are concerned?

The President. No, because what they're doing here is refusing even to give us a vote. And Senator Dole has refused even to give a vote on raising the **minimum wage**, or he wants to put this poison pill in it that will undermine workers' rights.

So the Democrats in the Senate are quite united. They have never been treated like this before, and they did not treat the Republicans like this before. And they have not abused the filibuster in their minority position the way the Republicans did for 2 years solid in 1993 and 1994. They have not done any of that. But they're saying they are sick and tired of seeing the millions and millions of American working families get the shaft from a refusal to even schedule a vote.

So what I'm saying is, we've got a logjam in the Congress. The two parties are at loggerheads, and I'm offering a way to fix the logjam. And that's the way to do it. Let's just vote on both of them clean.

Q. First, would you, in fact, sign the gas tax bill? And secondly, if the **minimum wage** measure is as important to you and your party as you say it is, why did you and your party not propose it when you had control of the Congress?

The President. The reason we didn't is that in the first year -- let me just say, I have always been on record in favor of **minimum wage** increases that more or less keep up with inflation. But in the very first year, keep in mind what I did, we doubled the earned-income tax credit and made it refundable and basically put ourselves on a track where we're going to take working families with children out of poverty.

But meanwhile, when it became apparent to me that the **minimum wage** was dropping to a 40-year low, it was obvious we had to increase it. And I had no reason to believe that this would be a big partisan issue. I mean, even Republicans had been willing in the past to vote for a **minimum wage** increase; it was only when they got into the majority that they decided it was a terrible idea. And so I had no reason to believe that they wouldn't. We did the first things first: We doubled the earned-income tax credit first, and then I asked for an increase in the **minimum wage**.

Now, I believe that we can still get this done -- you know, the last time we voted on a **minimum wage**, there was a Republican President, and a lot of Republican Members of Congress voted for it. I don't know why they have all suddenly decided it's a terrible thing to do.

Q. Will you sign the gas tax?

The President. I have told you what my position is. There is a logjam in the Congress. The Senators have made it clear that they want to vote on both of them, the Democratic Senators have. They are now using the filibuster in the way the Republicans repeatedly used it in 1993 and 1994. I am offering a way to break the logjam. I will be glad to sign both bills. They ought to vote them out clean. At least they should give us a clean vote on the **minimum wage**. That's what I think should be done.

Medicare and Medicaid

Q. Mr. President, your most recent Clinton/Gore campaign commercials still speak about Republican

cuts in Medicare and Medicaid. Speaker Gingrich points out repeatedly that these aren't cuts in Medicare or Medicaid; these are simply cuts in the projected growth of Medicare and Medicaid, which you in your own 7-year balanced budget proposal similarly propose.

Are you prepared now to stop calling the Republican savings in Medicare and Medicaid cuts?

The President. Let me say this, are you prepared to stop it? Are you prepared to stop it? When I came to Washington I was amazed when I proposed budgets, that that was the language that was used. The press used it. We all learned to use it from the press. I have seen repeated -- years and years of articles saying, cuts in this, cuts in that, cuts in the other thing.

And the question is, if you cut below the rate of inflation plus growth, is that a cut? I think it is. Should we say, a proposed cut? If you have 27 seconds to talk to the American people, how long does it take to say, "a proposed cut in the rate of increase but a real cut if it is less than the rate of increase plus growth"?

Now, keep in mind, this language has been used around Washington, not simply by politicians, but by others for a very long time. Most average Americans believe that it amounts to a cut in Medicare if they're being asked -- they're living on \$ 20,000 and they're being asked to pay higher premiums for the same thing they got last year, particularly if the premiums go up more than the rate of inflation.

So if there's going to be a change in the language, we ought to all get together and agree on what the language is. The language I am using, sir, is no different from the language the Republicans used when discussing defense all those years and no different than the press used on a regular basis when I arrived here. So maybe we should try to find some new language, but it ill becomes the Speaker to say when I -- you go back and you could probably find reams and reams and reams of speeches that he's given about defense and other issues, talking about cuts that weren't cuts; they were cuts in the rate of increase.

So we'll just -- I'm trying to be straight with the American people. And the truth is that the Republicans wanted to reduce the rate of investment in Medicare and Medicaid -- we talked about this in this room many times -- to a level that was completely unsustainable when we started this budget process, and that was going to impose significant and unjustifiable burdens on middle class families, working families, the old, the young, families with children with disabilities. And I still believe that what they're trying to do is not advisable, but we are much closer than we used to be.

The real answer is, they left these budget negotiations at the start of their primary season. We were very close together. We were closer together than was ever reported in the press. Why don't they want to come back and sit down and work together and come up with a balanced budget? Once we have an agreed-upon balanced budget, nobody will ever be debating this again. Everybody knows we have to have savings in the projected levels of spending in Medicare and Medicaid. The question is, is what they are trying to do good for Medicare and Medicaid? I don't believe it is.

And they have -- I would remind you that they now have a budget which acknowledges -- they now have a budget which acknowledges that their earlier levels of spending were too low. They do. They have abandoned their first budget already.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, if you get an immigration reform bill that forbids education to the sons of illegal immigrants, would you veto it?

The President. Well, I am opposed to that, as you know. And so far, it's not in the Senate bill. So we're trying to keep it out of the final bill, and I will do everything I can to keep it out.

Q. To answer Terry's [Terence Hunt, Associated Press] question, beyond language and beyond your suggestion to break the logjam, having just last night talked about the forces dividing society, how

will we see a change in you to usher in this new era of cooperation you seem to be suggesting today?

The President. First of all, you haven't heard me up there condemning the Speaker and Senator Dole in the kind of intense personal terms that they have used. You haven't heard that. You have never heard me doing that. Secondly, I have -- I did not end these budget negotiations. They did. Thirdly, whenever we sign -- whenever I sign legislation that has bipartisan support, I always give them credit for the work they do for America.

Now, I am not going to hide my differences from them from the American people, and I have never asked them to hide their differences from me from the American people. I don't ask Senator Dole to suspend his campaign or, you know, I don't ask him to stop doing -- going around saying I was wrong when I fought for the Family and Medical Leave Act, which he says all the time, that I was wrong when I stood up for the assault weapons ban or the Brady bill, and he led the opposition to it. I don't ask him to stop that.

All I'm saying is, we're supposed to show up for work here every day. And we were closer than was even reported in the press in the budget negotiations. Now they are adopting a strategy to say that "we're going to use the lawmaking process of the United States to force the President to veto bills where the main subject of the bill he is really for, because we would rather have the veto" -- and I think that's wrong -- or, "we're not going to permit people to get an increase in the **minimum wage**. We actually want the **minimum wage** to fall to a 40-year low." That's what they said.

So if the Democrats in the Senate are going to one time use the filibuster position they have, which the Republicans used over and over and over and over again in '93 and '94, to an extent never before seen in modern history, more than had ever been done before -- if they're going to do that, to demand a vote on the **minimum wage**, I have come here today not to play politics with them but to say, here is a way to balance the logjam. Let's have a clean vote on the temporary reduction in the gas tax. Let's have a clean vote on the **minimum wage**. Do that. It is the right thing to do. It's the right thing to do. It's right thing for America to do.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

LOAD-DATE: June 04, 1996

Source: [All Sources](#) : / . . . / : **Public Papers of the Presidents** 

Terms: **atl 8 (minimum wage)** ([Edit Search](#))

View: Full

Date/Time: Thursday, January 4, 2001 - 1:02 PM EST

[About LEXIS-NEXIS](#) | [Terms and Conditions](#)

Copyright © 2001 LEXIS-NEXIS Group. All rights reserved.