

*A background paper
from
Democratic Socialists
of America*

A Social
and
Economic
Bill of Rights
for the
21st Century

Social and Economic Rights for All

Introduction

Americans are familiar with the language of political and civil rights – one person, one voice, one vote; equal treatment before the law. We are less familiar with the justification for the social rights that have been at the center of our great political and social movements over the last century. For all citizens to flourish in a democratic society, they must be guaranteed such basic human needs as high-quality education, health care and security in old age. These goods are provided to every member of most democratic societies not by purchase on the private market, but through equitably financed, high-quality public goods and social insurance.

Social and economic rights play a critical role in democratic societies because political and civil rights cannot be exercised effectively by citizens who lack jobs, economic security, good health and the opportunity to educate themselves and their children. Today economic inequality - the large and growing gap between high-income and wealthy households and the rest of us - means that too many citizens are denied full participation in our social and political life.

The labor, women's and civil rights movements have all fought to limit the force of unregulated capitalist markets in order to insure equal social rights for all. Thus, the labor movement fought for unemployment, disability and old-age insurance. The feminist movement fought for parental leave and publicly funded child care. Movements of the poor fought for income security, job training and affordable higher education.

Many Americans devalue the social rights we have because they believe that their security results from personal responsibility and individual initiative. Only in the United States is child support and health care for adults and children means-tested. Until the Obama health care reforms, only the poor received fed-

erally funded health care for their children and themselves. Only poor women unable to find jobs in the labor market that provided health insurance and sufficient wages to pay for child care received federal funds to stay at home to care for infants. Hence, citizens who earned just above the poverty line have resented the poorer members of their community who received state-funded health care and child support. Such resentment fueled the vicious politics of welfare reform and the hostility of elements of the American working class toward the poor.

In societies where the publicly funded goods and social insurance are of high-quality, the upper middle-class participates willingly, paying their share of the progressive taxes that fund these social rights. In Germany, France and Scandinavia nearly all health care, child care and education through the university level is provided by and funded through the state. The result is rates of social mobility considerably higher than in the United States. The opportunities to realize one's full potential are not constrained by the wealth of one's parents or their position in the labor market.

In this booklet we detail a series of basic human social and economic rights whose implementation would help to achieve freedom and dignity for all. We also illustrate how these programs could be readily financed if we cut wasteful military expenditure and restore corporate and progressive income tax rates to their 1960s levels (when our growth rates were higher and our society more equitable). The social and economic rights that follow should form the basis of a second bill of rights for the 21st century.

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How we can pay for a social and economic bill of rights

Some readers of this booklet may say, “I agree with your goals, but we can’t afford them.” Yes we can. Most advanced industrial democracies provide these goods through progressive taxation, control of health care costs (either by providing publicly funded national health insurance or regulated insurance options offered by nonprofit health care providers), and the expenditure of a smaller portion of their GDP on the military than does the United States.

United States budget deficits are the result of public-policy decisions. They were created by three decades of tax cuts for the rich and corporations, an inefficient and expensive health care system and out-of-control military spending. If we restored taxes on corporations and the rich to 1960s levels, eliminated waste, fraud and boondoggle weapons contracts in defense spending and eliminated private profit in health care, we could recreate the economy and society that existed between 1947 and 1973 when marginal tax rates on the wealthy and excess profits taxes on corporations ranged between 50 percent and 90 percent. During this period workers benefitted from union density of 35 percent at its peak, an opportunity to enjoy middle-class standards of consumption, and income inequality reached its lowest point in U.S. history. Progressive personal and corporate income tax rates would fund a robust public education system, childcare, parental leave and universal health care. Moreover, a simple and just reform in the financing of Social Security — removing the cap on income subject to the Social Security tax — would secure benefits for projected recipients into the foreseeable future.

The current federal budget deficit is nearly \$1.4 trillion — 10 percent of our GDP. Most economists, conservative as well as liberal, believe that half of this deficit was caused by the counter-cyclical spending required to combat the financial crisis of 2008 and the ensuing Great Recession. Thus the deficit will shrink as the economy recovers, job growth resumes

and personal incomes rise. The remainder of the current deficit, some \$700 billion, was largely the result of the Reagan and Bush tax cuts, the failure to raise taxes to finance two wars and a profit-driven health system that drives up costs for Medicare and Medicaid.

Reversing the Bush tax cuts would yield \$125 billion in additional federal revenue per year. Restoring corporate and income tax rates to those of the Eisenhower era would yield another \$300 billion in revenue. Eliminating weapons programs we no longer need and reducing our more than 200 foreign military bases would yield another \$200-300 billion in yearly revenues. Additional revenues needed to achieve the promise of the social and economic bill of rights should be raised by a modest transaction tax of 0.25 percent on all financial trading. This tax alone could raise over \$600 billion in annual revenue, while tamping down destabilizing financial speculation. What Willy Sutton once said about why he robbed banks, because “That’s where the money is,” remains true today.

Everyone has the right to a living wage job

This is the most fundamental criterion for judging the performance of an economy: that it generates living-wage jobs for all who are willing and able to work. A living-wage job is one that provides sufficient income to support both the worker and any dependents that rely on the worker’s income for their economic well-being. The right to a living wage job for all means the elimination of a low-wage sector of the labor force. It further means the end of unequal access to good jobs by race, ethnicity and gender. Low wage labor is a subsidy to inefficient capital, discouraging both skill development and the creation of career ladders that allow workers to move up the wage scale over time. Coupled with the unemployed, the low wage labor sector of the work force puts downward pressure on all wages as capital always holds out the possibility that workers who seek “too much” at the bargaining table may be replaced by those willing to accept less.

In a market society, much of our self esteem is rooted in our work experience. Thus the impact of a wage or salary level is more than simply economic: low wages devalue a worker's contribution and demean the worker whose labor is insufficient to support him/herself and others who depend upon them. Living wage jobs, in contrast, send the message that the worker's contribution is of value and in turn the worker her/himself is a valued member of society. Living wages encourage the self-actualization of workers, both in the workplace and in their lives outside the workplace.

Living wage jobs may be in either the private or the public sector of the economy. Because private capital has demonstrated neither the ability nor the willingness to create living wage jobs in much of the human services area, government, at the federal, state or local level, will necessarily be the prime mover in creating many jobs that meet the social needs of an advanced industrial society and in achieving full employment at living wages.

Everyone has the right to a sufficient amount of nutritious and safe food

To say that sufficient, safe and nutritious food is a basic right seems a truism. Yet today, as in FDR's day, large swaths of the American population lack sufficient or nutritious food. Recent gains in food provision have been reversed by the current recession, forcing a choice between food and medicine or utilities in many cases.

Reports from food banks tell a familiar story – demand is up, and these providers have a hard time keeping sufficient food on hand. Not surprisingly, one in eight Americans is using food stamps, including many formerly middle-class families, even with working family members. Parents frequently go without a meal to ensure that their children can eat. Rather than hunger, this phenomenon goes by a newer name – food insecurity, or not knowing *whether* you will have food. Why have improvements in productivity not resulted in adequate food for everyone?

The food that is available often lacks in nutritional value. Supermarkets stock a wide variety of foods, but are they healthy foods? The corn sweetener and soy-product- based foods produced by agribusiness create highly processed, possibly genetically modified pseudo-varieties of questionable nutrition. Within wealthier and more stable neighborhoods, locally farmed and varied products sometimes satisfy nutritional needs as well as environmental desires for shorter supply routes and less pollution. However, these are rarely available in poorer neighborhoods, which often have to rely on more limited supplies of less healthy foods.

In some inner city neighborhoods, urban gardening is taking hold. Fresh and healthy foods can be supplied directly to the families who need them. Contrary to agribusiness practices that deplete the soil, many of these projects use sustainable agricultural practices to continue to produce at greater rates. Farmers' markets should also be expanded to these neighborhoods.

Equally important is the safety of our food supply. Repeated cuts in the staff of public agencies such as the Food and Drug Administration that oversees our food chain have crippled this vital work. In addition, global trade results in widespread importation of foods that may not be safe; these practices have already spawned food scares and recalls. The answer to this is federal funding and a new respect for the governmental role in ensuring safety of the food supply, as well as the recognition that profit alone cannot be the standard for such a necessity.

Everyone has the right to affordable and safe housing

The goal of the 1949 Housing Act was "a decent home and a suitable home environment for every American family." However, even before the financial meltdown and the resulting tidal wave of foreclosures, FDR's depiction of a nation one-third ill-housed, remained accurate. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, one in three households, split equally between

home owners and renters, confront the problem of housing affordability. In addition, as many as 3.5 million people face homelessness for varying periods of time in any given year and another 1 million are chronically homeless, some suffering from mental illness or addiction. Ordinances criminalizing loitering, sleeping and panhandling behavior are enacted by cities to keep the homeless out of public view.

It was an economic system permitting home prices and rents to outpace inflation and rise faster than incomes that sowed the seeds of this crisis. For low income households, who need low rent housing, especially among people of color, the situation is alarming. HUD estimates the average wait for a public housing unit is 11 months and Section 8 housing vouchers are no longer available. The stock of low income housing continues to decline as older public housing projects are demolished. As the federal government's role in providing housing has lessened, the influence of private real estate and business interests have grown. The result has been more housing for those with greater wealth and income and less for lower income households. This shift in housing supply facilitated the push of predatory mortgage lenders into lower income communities.

A progressive approach to housing affordability, in contrast, would treat housing as a social good rather than as a profit-producing commodity. Government should promote alternative forms of housing ownership — co-ops, nonprofit and community development corporations — that would also be committed to revitalizing communities. Despite being much maligned, public housing has served more low income tenants than any single program and should therefore remain a core element of housing policy. In order to meet the housing affordability crisis, all public housing units should be replaced with new units at no less than a one-to-one basis.

Banks and mortgage companies have created a maelstrom of foreclosures. Mortgage securitization, predatory lending practices and the steering of families into sub prime loans generated over 4.5 million foreclosures in 2007 and 2008 with no let-up in 2009. With the high and long term unemployment patterns,

another 8 million Americans may face foreclosures as Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) move well above the “teaser” rate.

Banks were saved from insolvency by the bailout, but they have refused to extend credit or negotiate affordable loan modifications with homeowners, especially for those with an “underwater mortgage” (the mortgage amount being higher than the value of the home). Homeowners are bearing the burden of the housing market collapse.

Banks ignored prudential lending rules and thus banks should absorb the losses on their speculative mortgages. A governmental agency with authority, modeled on the Home Owners Loan Corporation of the New Deal, could require banks to renegotiate underwater mortgages, setting the loan at the home's present fair market value. If homeowners cannot meet the renegotiated mortgage payments, they would have the right to remain in their home and pay a current fair-value rent to the mortgage owner. Beyond such measures, federal anti-predatory legislation should be enacted prohibiting abusive loan practices, guaranteeing judicial review and just cause evictions and providing for assignee liability so that transferees of the mortgage would be held liable for any violations. Finally, the bankruptcy code should be amended to allow a judge to modify the basic terms of a home mortgage.

The goal of affordable and safe shelter can be realized by government programs and subsidies with mandated targets and timetables. Then and only then will the right to housing be truly secured.

Everyone has a right to preventive, acute and long term health care

In 1948, the United States ratified the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Among the rights explicitly mentioned in this document is the right to health care. However, prior to the passage of health reform in 2010, 47 million of our citizens had no health insurance. Another 50 to 70 million had inadequate insurance — insurance that would leave them bankrupt in the event of a

major illness. It is not yet clear the extent to which the health care legislation passed in 2010 will address these problems because the problems with the United States health care system are deep rooted and long lasting.

The employer-based system of providing health insurance that has contributed to runaway inflation in the cost of health insurance premiums and pharmaceuticals threatens the competitiveness of American manufacturing and has become an untenable burden on small businesses. Despite our massive spending on health care, the U.S. lags behind most industrialized countries in terms of the quality of our health care system as measured by several common parameters used by the World Health Organization, such as life expectancy, infant mortality and doctor visits/capita. The contrast between our spending levels for and the quality of our health care exists because we continue to utilize the wrong paradigm for health care delivery in this country. We treat health care as a commodity for sale rather than as a public good (such as education, police protection, and the fire department) to which everyone is entitled.

The corporate model of health care is inefficient, creates barriers to access and produces unnecessary deaths. In 2008, the U.S. spent \$2.2 trillion on health care — 16 percent of our gross domestic product. *Consumer Reports* has estimated that one-quarter of this spending is wasted. The largest source of waste is duplication of administrative bureaucracies. There are 1500 private health insurance companies in this country, each with its own administrative staff and paperwork. Three quarters of health care expenditures in the U.S. are consumed by the 10 percent of the population with chronic illnesses. Health insurance companies thus have a strong incentive to exclude people with chronic illnesses from their plans. If they do so, they can improve their margins while simultaneously offering lower premiums to their healthy customers. The resulting lack of access is not an abstract point. The Institute of Medicine (the medical branch of the National Academy of Science) estimates that 45,000 people die each year due to lack of health insurance.

Our market-driven model of health care is also responsible for the high cost of care in this country.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that if the U.S. were to adopt a single-payer health insurance system, we could save in excess of \$400 billion per year — enough to cover all those who are presently uninsured.

A single-payer national health system is the simplest, most efficient alternative to our market-driven approach to health care delivery. The features of a single-payer system are:

- 1) Universal, comprehensive coverage — Everyone receives a health care card giving them access to a wide range of health care services.
- 2) No out-of-pocket payments — Out-of-pocket payments create barriers to access for the poor and add administrative cost to the health care system.
- 3) Hospitals are paid “lump sum” operating budgets — The valuable time of clinical staff is no longer devoted to making sure a bill is generated for every aspirin administered but can instead be devoted to patient care.
- 4) Portability — Health insurance is no longer linked to employment or geography but instead follows the worker from job to job and from state to state.
- 5) Separate capital budgets — Money for expensive technology is distributed according to a regional plan based on the needs of the local population.

If we believe that health care is a human right to which everyone is entitled as opposed to a commodity that is for sale to the highest bidder, then we must legislate the financing mechanism consistent with this belief: single-payer national health insurance.

Everyone has a right to free, high quality public education

In the rapidly changing world of the 21st century, a first class education is a prerequisite for the attainment of all the economic rights that we advocate. At one time, elementary school was considered the minimum requirement to participate fully in the society; then it became education through high

school. In the present era, with the advance of technology and rise of global institutions, it has become clear that a post-high school education, whether in college, or alternative career and technical training, plays the same essential role as high school in an earlier era.

Each of these previous eras accepted that society had the obligation to provide high quality, free public education up to the level of the “terminal degree” of that era. Today, the right to education must include free, or minimal cost, education beyond the high school level for all those who desire it. Free public education is the key to reducing the extremes of economic inequality, of overcoming the debilitating consequences of poverty, of integrating immigrants fully into the mainstream of society and creating the possibility for all members of a community to contribute.

Education for citizenship requires more than reading and math. Education must develop the ability to think critically, to question received wisdom and willingness to challenge authority.

Thus, education at all levels must be funded adequately, with special attention paid to schools in low-income communities. Teaching must become a high status profession, teachers and teachers’ unions must be protected from scapegoating for other failures in the system. Finally, the institutions of tenure and faculty-shared governance must be defended because they are integral to the liberating education we seek, and the “business model” of the university must be resisted.

Every human being is capable of learning and acquiring knowledge and skills. It is the responsibility of society as a whole to ensure that each individual go as far on the path of education as they are capable and desire.

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Everyone has the right to give and receive care

There are 40 million children in the United States under age 10 and approximately 50 million elderly and/or disabled. Both of these groups need caring support with many of the basic tasks of daily life. Such care and support should be provided both by family members as well as by professionally trained, respected and well-paid care providers.

As the number of people who need care has grown, the United States “care deficit” has also grown. Americans now work in the formal labor market, on average, 160 hours per year longer than they did 30 years ago. Nearly 40 years after President Nixon’s 1971 veto of a publicly funded child care bill, the United States ranks 168th out of 173 countries surveyed in regards to guaranteed paid parental leave (alongside Lesotho and Swaziland) and 146th in mandated paid sick days for short or long-term illness. Unlike 134 other countries the United States fails to legislate a maximum length for the workweek.

The United States is unique among advanced democratic nations by making caring for one’s loved ones primarily a private burden. Northern and Western European nations use policies that include high-quality public day care and preschool, as well as paid maternity and paternity leave. They have initiated child allowances to enable working families to better afford the costs of raising children, while, their health and social insurance systems enable a high proportion of the dependent elderly to afford dignified, professional, in-home care.

Absent such social policies, the “care burden” falls disproportionately on women – who end up working a “second shift.” As more and more women have entered the paid labor force, the combining of full time work with the requirements of child and elder care have spread from working class and poor women to middle income women.

But a just society must not only guarantee that

those who need care receive it and that families are able to care for their dependents. A right to care must also mean the right for paid caregivers to be professionally trained so they can provide humane, high-quality care, and be paid a living wage.

While claiming to “leave no child behind,” we underpay our teacher aides, day care workers and in-home care providers. Coupled with often exploitative working conditions, the result is high turnover, interrupted and all too often lower quality care. The average day care worker in the U.S. leaves their place of employment within a year; whereas in France, professionally trained, unionized pre-school teachers make more than well-paid elementary school teachers.

The justness of a society can well be judged by the status of its most vulnerable members – its elderly and children. With the highest child poverty rate among affluent societies (20 percent versus four percent in northern Europe), the United States must institute a right to decent child care if it is to fulfill the promise of equal rights for all.

Everyone has the right to income security throughout their life

The assurance of income security, when coupled with the right to a living wage job, provides a web of economic well being that living wage jobs alone are insufficient to create. Income security means that loss of a job will not force the sale of a house or the dissolution of a relationship with loved ones. Income security means that our lives after our working life ends will be lived in economic fullness rather than in a financial vacuum. Income security means that a disabling accident or illness will not destroy our economic well-being.

In a society that assures income security, loss of a job will open opportunities to new employment without the pressure to accept the first job offer that emerges. Thus, income security gives all of us the freedom to take a chance on a new job that may more fully develop our potential as workers and as human beings. Income security also provides the economic space for

development of independent ideas and thinking. These in turn provide the basis for an independent politics that articulates the needs and wants of the population as a whole rather than the desires and fancies of a wealthy elite.

Finally, the assurance of adequate income for all, even in periods of employment transition, increases the economic potential of our entire society. Instead of desperate efforts to retain jobs in industries that are undergoing rapid technological change and possible employment loss, income security encourages cooperation between capital and labor to apply new technologies and seek new areas of investment. The result is a society that moves towards its economic potential and an economics and economic policy whose goals are for all of us to live “wisely, agreeably and well.”

Everyone has the right to leisure time

E*ight hours for work, Eight hours for rest, and Eight hours for what we will.* A truly participatory democracy requires that every citizen have adequate leisure time, in which to fully develop intellectually, culturally, politically and spiritually in the manner of their own choosing. A democracy’s strength is the thoughtful and full engagement of all of its citizens in the decision-making processes in their communities and at all levels of government. To reach our full potential, we must have adequate leisure time in which to think, learn and play. All the art that a society produces is only possible when people have enough time free from the demands of earning a living to freely express their creativity and ingenuity.

The pursuit of profits by capitalists is in direct opposition to leisure time. The relentless effort to squeeze the most work possible out of employees denies working people the supposed efficiencies of capitalism because they do not benefit from more leisure time to enjoy the fruits of their labor. If it were left to the unregulated market to determine workers’ hours, we would quickly see a return to the 12-16 hour work-day, six or even seven days a week. Under such condi-

tions working people are simply too exhausted to think, let alone fully engage in the politics of their communities, receive an education or enjoy art and beauty.

In the United States the decades long struggle for increased leisure time, weekends and over-time pay culminated in congressional passage of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in 1938. The eight-hour day became standard thanks to both union bargaining and the FLSA requirement of “time-and-a-half” pay for any hours worked, in excess of 40, during a single week.

Today, in the United States, the eight-hour day is being eroded as corporate CEOs continue their pursuit of profits at the expense of workers. Extra pay for overtime hours was intended to be a financial penalty, encouraging employers to expand their workforce rather than rely on overtime to meet production needs. When job-based benefits like health insurance began to bulk up labor costs, premium pay ceased to be a deterrent to overtime. It became cheaper for employers to schedule overtime than hire new workers.

The failure of FLSA to establish limits on the working day or week has left Americans working more hours than in other advanced industrialized countries. Productivity increases while pay stagnates, forcing people to work additional hours, take second jobs or max-out their credit cards in order to keep up with the rising cost of living. This erosion of leisure time undermines the founding principles of democracy and exposes the contradictions of a capitalist system that exploits workers instead of benefiting them.

Everyone has the right to a healthy environment

What use is a fine house if you don't
have a tolerable planet to put it on?
-Thoreau

Environmental health is inherently collective. Owners of polluting factories may locate themselves upstream and the impact of pollution may vary, but

what goes around comes around: toxic substances circulate through air, water and food. When species and ecosystems are driven to extinction, their loss affects and is felt by every person. The oil spilled by BP in the Gulf did not stop at the wellhead.

Everyone deserves the right to air, water, topsoil, food and a workplace and community free of pollution that degrades health and well-being. All should have access to parks, natural areas and information about the known hazards and uncertain risks to which we are exposed. Further, we demand the right to participate in decisions on resource use and living conditions, so that the natural world and its fantastic diversity of living creatures, habitats and interactions will be sustained and survive for posterity.

The grossly unequal distribution of wealth and power exposes communities with the least power to the greatest environmental abuse. Thus the struggle for environmental justice in the United States began with low-income communities of color.

Only when there are no more powerless communities to serve as environmental dumps, can we eliminate pollution sources that belong in nobody's backyard: Not On Planet Earth. A basic environmental justice demand and an effective deterrent is the requirement that polluters pay full cleanup costs, including the mitigation of later health problems in exposed communities.

The great systems that sustain life on Earth—the atmosphere, oceans, lakes, rivers and groundwater, soils and natural ecosystems—must be recognized as commons belonging to everyone and managed democratically. Left to the logic of the private market, they will be exploited to extinction. Our posterity will inherit a healthy planet only if we end the profit-driven throwaway corporate economy and replace it with a production system designed for systematic reuse and recycling of materials.

The global climate system is in grave peril from the unrestricted use of fossil fuels that powered the industrial revolution. We are moving toward conditions incompatible with those that made human civilization

possible. A transition to renewable energy and innovation in energy productivity can continue to raise living standards, but quality of life can improve even more with cultural change, in Bill McKibben's phrase, toward "fewer belongings and more belonging."

Healthy communities require managing metropolitan land use in the public interest, developing public transit and halting suburban sprawl. A political realignment that links older, working class suburbs with inner cities can be the basis of an environmental and social justice politics.

We face a choice: to extend the right to an environmentally sustainable life to everyone, or face escalating ecological catastrophes and resource wars. This challenge is as radical as the industrial and agricultural revolutions. But nobody will have a tolerable planet unless the right to a healthy environment is extended to all.

Everyone has the right to associate in whatever organizational form they choose

The right to freely organize and to participate in decision-making within the community and workplace is the keystone to the arch of social and economic rights. Without that right, formal democracy is a sham and the workplace remains a bulwark of repression.

Elites throughout history have opposed popular participation in decision-making, dismissing community organizing as agitation and labor organizing as interference in the employer's right to manage. For example, the right-wing attack on ACORN stemmed from hatred of its success in mobilizing an interracial movement of poor and powerless communities to influence elections and political decisions on behalf of their interests.

The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) of 1935 ended the legal stigmatization of labor unions as illegal conspiracies. The NLRA committed the feder-

al government to "protect the exercise by workers of full freedom of association, self-organization and designation of representatives of their own choosing," and to "encourage the practice and procedure of collective bargaining." But over the last several decades, the actual machinery of the National Labor Relations Board has been captured by employers. Today, the NLRB functions more as an obstacle union organizing. Court decisions have narrowed the scope for the exercise of workers' rights to self-expression in the workplace, while granting full license to employers under the rubric of exercising "free speech" to browbeat and intimidate employees from choosing union representation.

Illegal actions by employers to destroy union organizing drives, including the wholesale firing of pro-union activists, have become routine. The penalties for flagrantly breaking labor law are so limited that employers consider them simply costs of doing business. Some 60 million unorganized workers might choose union representation if they actually had a real choice in a fair election, but these opportunities are suppressed in the private and public sectors.

The Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) would restore the original intent of the NLRB by permitting workers to choose union representation without fear and intimidation. If a majority of workers demonstrated their choice to form a union, it would be certified without a delay-ridden and coercive election process. Employer stonewalling on negotiating a first collective agreement could trigger an arbitration process. Penalties for serious abuses of workers' rights to organize would be stiffened.

However, business and the right-wing remain ferociously opposed to any restoration of the right to freely organize. Only a major mobilization by outraged citizens demanding this right could put enough spine in timid Democratic politicians to pass any substantive reform like EFCA.

Social and economic rights might be codified in national law and international declarations, but their actual implementation is always dependent on an aroused citizenry willing to organize and fight for them.

Democratic Socialists of America...

is an activist organization, not a political party. From promoting single-payer healthcare, to combating the war in Iraq and the war on the poor, to proposing democratic alternatives to the power of the transnational corporations, **DSA** is central to struggles to advance a progressive America. This struggle is carried on not only by prominent leaders, but more importantly, through the work of **DSA** activists in communities and on campuses.

America's right-wing built powerful movements around big ideas and fundamental values. Their leadership is motivated and organized ideologically. We progressives need to proclaim our big ideas and our fundamentally democratic values.

So, take the next step. Stand up with us for your socialist values. Join with us in affirming a progressive future for America. **DSA** works on immediate issues, like peace, health care and immigrants' rights, as we build a long-term-movement for social and economic change. To join **DSA** is to contribute to a movement which builds coalitions across single-issue movements and educates the public about the threat posed to democracy by unbridled corporate power.

Globalization and the growth of corporate power threaten the possibility of democracy both at home and abroad. We are part of an international movement fostering solidarity across national borders in order to construct an alternative to the current order. But as residents of the most powerful capitalist nation, we recognize that our greatest act of international solidarity is to build a vibrant, multicultural left in the United States. We invite you to join us in this effort, an effort worthy of a lifetime of commitment.



DSA is the major organization on the American left with an all embracing moral vision, systematic social analysis and political praxis rooted in the quest for radical democracy,

social freedom, and individual liberties.

-Cornel West

*Active organizing for democracy is needed now more than ever. For this to succeed, both working and poor people — who are the majority — have to have a voice. **DSA** is one of those voices.* **-Dolores Huerta**



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