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Economic Impact Grows Nationwide

Official Layoff Numbers Show Largest Jump in 21 Years

What had been bad economic news for several weeks worsened November 2, with the release of unemployment numbers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The unemployment rate jumped a half percentage point to 5.4 percent--the largest one-month jump since May 1980.

Announced layoffs tracked by the AFL-CIO topped more than 638,000. This adds to the 1.1 million jobs lost in 2001 before the September 11 attacks. Researchers report that large numbers of layoffs will not show in official counts. In industries like hospitality, workers are not formally laid-off like in some sectors, they are simply told not to come in or have their hours reduced.

While workers are bearing the brunt of the economic fallout, Congress and the White House have done virtually nothing to offer assistance to the more than half-million working families who have lost a regular paycheck. Instead, their relief efforts so far have concentrated on funneling billions of dollars in aid and tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy.

On October 24, more than six weeks after the attacks, the Republican-controlled House of Representatives passed a \$100 billion, so-called economic stimulus package that earmarks almost nearly \$90 billion for tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy.

The AFL-CIO will continue compiling layoff information--including actual jobs terminated as well as announcements--and updating it at www.afl-cio.org.

The following are statistics of layoffs by sector:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Transportation | 129,924 |
| Hospitality, Tourism, Entertainment | 135,931 |
| Communications & Utilities | 48,168 |
| Manufacturing | 161,024 |
| Aerospace | 74,681 |
| Retail Trade | 14,496 |
| Services | 39,610 |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 23,322 |
| Public Administration | 8,793 |
| Mining | 2,363 |
| <hr/> | |
| Total | 638,312 |

Our Nation at Risk

U.S. Steel Mills can produce only 80 percent of the steel that our country needs. Some 500 members of the community around Virginia, Minn., packed the local school auditorium to hear witness after witness deliver the same message--"Unless government acts to curb steel dumping on the American market, the Iron Range and the entire country are in trouble. If our nation continues on its present course, we will have to depend on foreign steel, semi-finished steel slabs, or iron ore."

"If our domestic sources are in danger, so is America's economy, and our national independence will be in danger," International Secretary-Treasurer Jim English told a Department of Commerce hearing in a town what has seen 14,000 of its breadwinners go jobless when LTV closed its iron ore mine earlier this year. "It is not exaggeration to say the steel industry is in severe crisis. Unless something is done about it, it could lead to a situation where it is terminal."

The Commerce Department hearing was held under provisions of Section 232 of the 1962 Trade Adjustment Act that allows the administration to determine that a collapse of an industry could create a

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Child Poverty on the Rise in Working Families

Some 12.1 million children are poor, and most live in homes where at least one parent in the household works, according to the *State of America's Children Yearbook 2001*.

Released in April by the Children's Defense Fund, the report finds that one in six American children lived in poverty, and that 2.4 million, or 26 percent of poor children, lived in extreme poverty in 1999, up from 21 percent in 1996.

Although more Americans have found employment in recent years, many of those jobs don't pay enough to benefit working families' children. According to the report, the proportion of poor children living in households in which someone works continues to climb--78 percent in 1999, up from 61 percent in 1993.

According to CDF President Marian Wright Eldelman, "Child poverty is our choice--the morale and political choice that our nation continues to make year after year," even while many citizens enjoy "the wealthiest time in American history with a \$10 trillion economy and eight years of unprecedented economic growth.

The report, including shipping, is \$21.24 (\$22.37 for Washington, D.C. residents). To order, call 202-662-3652; fax credit card orders to 202-628-8333; or send a check to CDF Publications, P.O. Box 90500, Washington, D.C. 20090.

Why Is This Job Killing Me?

By Lynn Baker

When I was little, my father worked in the paint industry around solvents, lacquers and various chemicals. I thought the back of his hands looked like a prehistoric cave man's hands because they were puffy, had rashes, and the skin was cracked. Working during the day at paint factories and attending engineering school at night, dad was trying to support us and get a better paying job.

The book, *Why Is This Job Killing Me?* discusses how the chemicals and paints my father was exposed to could have affected him. The OSHA law did not come into effect until almost a decade after my dad started working at these plants. The legislation was due to pressure on Congress from labor and community groups.

In 1983, OSHA listed neurotoxic disorders, from exposure to toxic chemicals, among the top ten leading causes of work-related disease and injury. The nervous system is sensitive to such toxins, which can affect the peripheral nervous system (the nerves in the extremities) and the central nervous system (primarily the brain and spinal cord).

Why Is This Job Killing Me? gives an overview of the ten leading occupational illnesses and diseases workers face--reproductive hazards, cancer, lung disorders (like silicosis and asbestosis), neurotoxic disorders, stress disorders, cardiovascular diseases, hearing loss, skin diseases, musculoskeletal injuries and traumatic injuries (like amputations and burns).

Each chapter begins with the story of a worker affected by an occupational illness or disease. Then there is a discussion of the health problem: what can cause it and how one gets exposed. The last section of each chapter gives suggestions on what individuals and companies can do to make the workplace safer.

Though the book states that workers are responsible for their safety and health in the workplace, the authors are not implying that employees control all the safety factors in their job. This is not a book cheerleading health and safety programs that so many companies rely on so they do not have to take responsibility for accidents and occupational illnesses they can do something about. Quite the opposite is true.

The authors talk about the many factors that go into health and safety--processes, working conditions, equipment, maintenance, training, warning systems, etc. This is not a book that is lax on the responsibilities companies have toward the creation of a safe and healthy workplace.

Emphasized throughout is that knowledge is power. "It is our hope, that even if a reader did not read about his particular occupation, he at least would come away with an awareness of the magnitude of workplace safety and health issues and that he would become more observant of possible risks in his own workplace," write the authors in the last chapter of the book entitled, "Getting Help."

Workers are urged to take an active role in health and safety matters, and if they have a union, to use that organization to push for a safe workplace. Resources a worker can tap for more information and assistance are listed at the end of the book.

We all are the canaries in the mine when it comes to job safety and health. Anyone who works for a living--no matter what the job is--is risking his or her good health, perhaps even life, because of job-related illness and injuries.

A portion of the profits of the book are donated to the Alice Hamilton Foundation. Dr. Alice Hamilton (1869-1970) was a pioneer in the field of industrial hygiene in the United States and is sometimes called the Mother of Industrial Hygiene. The foundation is dedicated to creating awareness of occupational safety and health issues worldwide, and seeks to work especially with underserved populations, such as women, people of color and developing nations.

Copies of *Why Is This Job Killing Me?* can be ordered through your local bookstore. If your local library does not carry the book, ask for it through internet library loan.

National Labor Relations Board: The Numbers Don't Add Up for Workers

Percentage of National Labor Relations Board elections in which the employer:

- Forces workers to attend captive audience, anti-union meetings: 92
- Directs supervisors to conduct one-on-one pressure sessions with employees: 79
- Hires anti-union consultants: 76
- Fires union supporters: 29

Source: "Uneasy Terrain: The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers, Wages and Union Organizing," by Kate Bronfenbrenner, examines union elections in 1998 and 1999. Cornell University, September 2000.

Our Nation at Risk

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hazard to our national security. "As our country has become dependent on foreign countries for petroleum, we will first become dependent on them for iron ore and then for steel," said Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Commissioner John Swift. "My warning to the people in Washington is to watch Minnesota mines. When the mines here begin to close, you will see the beginning of a dependence on foreign steel."

Local 4108 President Jerry Fallos told the panel that the closing of the LTV mine was a local, immediate, in-your-face reminder of the reality of the Steel and Iron Ore industry crisis and its effect on a community and its workers.

District II Director Dave Foster made recommendations to the panel that included:

- Cap semi-finished steel slab imports at pre-crisis levels of 6.9 million tons per year.
- Implement a government-guaranteed loan program to help integrate steelmakers.
- Place a surcharge on all domestically consumed steel to help iron ore and steel producers meet retiree costs.
- Provide funding for steel mergers that promote the maintenance of coke, iron ore, and steel-making capacity; employment retention, and environmental compliance.

"I want you to understand that without government action to stem the flood of imported steel being dumped into this country, there is no hope that the steel industry will be able to save itself," Foster said. "Without government action against imports, the iron ore industry and the iron ore miners' way of life are headed, and quickly headed, to extinction."

Steellabor, 4069 Bradley Circle, N.W., Canton, OH 44718-2565.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Effects on Working Women

What is the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)?

The FTAA is a trade agreement that would include nearly all of the Western Hemisphere: North America, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean (excluding Cuba). The FTAA will affect the lives of 800 million people throughout the hemisphere. The FTAA would expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which applies to Canada, the United States, and Mexico, to include a total of 34 countries extending from Canada to Brazil. Economists estimate that U.S. workers have lost 800,000 job opportunities because of NAFTA trade. Like NAFTA, the FTAA would give corporations the power to drive wages down by moving factories to countries where workers do not have the right to form unions and working conditions are hazardous.

Who is negotiating the FTAA and what are the issues?

The United States is represented by the U.S. Trade Representative's office (USTR). The issues being discussed for the FTAA include agriculture, services, investment, dispute settlement, intellectual property rights, subsidies and antidumping, competition policy, government procurement, and market access.

How will the FTAA affect working women?

It will decrease wages and make working conditions worse. Most likely many consumer goods that you have are made by working women living in a country that will be included in the FTAA. Under NAFTA, export-processing zones (EPZ) have employed a large number of women, most between the ages of 16 and 25. EPZs are tax-free industrial zones for foreign corporations in which labor laws often are suspended or not implemented, leaving workers unprotected in many ways. The wages women earn in an EPZ often are 20 percent to 30 percent less than for men employed in EPZs and below the minimum wages need to provide food, electricity, and shelter for a family.

It will reduce access to public services. The FTAA, based on NAFTA, will greatly limit the control of local and national governments over public services. Domestic laws that protect health and safety, the environment, and the rights of working women and their families could be challenged under FTAA. The privatization of health care and education services has significant impact on working women who are public-service employees and working women who rely on the availability of affordable, high-quality public services. It will challenge fundamental rights of working women. Although NAFTA created employment opportunities for some women, these jobs usually are the lowest paid and offer no benefits. How many friends or relatives do you know who have lost their job through NAFTA? They may receive TAA or NAFTA/TAA training benefits. But the mere existence of training is not enough when their training will not address the long-term income loss when workers may have to accept a job at a lower salary than they received at their previous job. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics,

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Working Longer--Making Less

The nation's economic boom has benefited the wealthy, but passed over the middle- and low-income families. While the nation's overall economy improved in the late 1990s, more workers are working longer hours, lack health insurance, and are carrying more debt, according to *The State of Working America, 2000-2001*, the Economic Policy Institute's biennial report.

Among the report's key findings:

- After more than 15 years of stagnation and decline, inflation-adjusted wages rose for all workers between 1995 and 1999. The lowest- and highest-paid workers saw the greatest wage growth.
- Labor productivity--the value of goods and services workers produce--has grown exceptionally fast, about 2.5 percent annually, since 1995. But workers aren't sharing in those gains, with low- and middle-income workers experiencing a drop in total household income.
- In the 1990s, wage inequality in America shifted. In the 1980s, it "fanned out," with the lowest- and highest-paid workers pulling away from the middle. But in the 1990s, wages for the lowest-paid workers and those in the middle grew closer, while wages for the highest paid pulled further away from those groups.

Overall, the economic picture for workers improved in the late 1990s. But the report's co-authors--Lawrence Mishel, Jared Bernstein, and John Schmitt--wonder whether "these many improvements mean that we are living in the best economy ever?" Economic progress in the late 1990s, they point out, follows a long period of wage stagnation and decline in the standard of living, while wage and income inequalities remain high.

Only 62.9 percent of the workforce had employer-provided health coverage in 1998, compared with 70.2 percent in 1979. The average family now works 83 weeks a year, up from 68 weeks in 1969. And an average middle-income African American family needed more than 12 additional weeks of work than the average white family to reach the middle-income ranks in the 1990s. Personal bankruptcies, the "ultimate indicator of debt-related difficulties," the report says, increased continuously during the late 1990s, with about six of every 1,000 adults declaring bankruptcy in 1999, almost twice the rate as in 1989, the last business cycle peak.

The authors, who wrote the report before passage in March of a bankruptcy "reform" bill that will make it almost impossible for working families to get a fresh start, note they completed the report's final draft a year ago, when a recession did not seem as likely as today. "We already are talking about a recession and seeing signs of the labor market unraveling," Bernstein says. "I would hope that workers could expect more out of the economy than a few years of tight markets and good growth."

According to George Gonos, an assistant professor of employment relations at the State University of New York at Potsdam, threats of layoffs "will be used to manipulate the workforce." Even before President George W. Bush took office, "he was talking up the recession. Reading between the lines, you can hear that as a way to hold down any further wage increases," Gonos adds.

Although income inequality among America's working families grew at a slower rate in the 1990s than in the previous decade, the report finds that the poorest 20 percent of the nation's working families experienced a drop in their share of the nation's total household income—a 0.3 percent decrease—with the middle 20 percent of families seeing a 0.9 percent decrease. Only the wealthiest top fifth of all families gained—2.6 percent.

Contributing to that increase were capital gains on stocks and skyrocketing CEO pay. The AFL-CIO Executive Pay Watch website (www.aflcio.org/paywatch/ceopay.htm) reports that, according to *Business Week's* annual survey, the average CEO of a major corporation made \$12.4 million in 1999, up 17 percent from the previous year. That's 475 times more than an average blue-collar worker and six times the average CEO paycheck in 1990.

Because wages rose faster for the least- and highest-paid Americans in the 1990s, there has been a "hollowing out in the middle," Bernstein says. Income inequality--which is higher in the United States than any other industrialized nation, according to the report--can mean such stark social inequalities as lack of access to health care and good schools and increased vulnerability to crime, Mishel explains. "I think many people care about inequality," he says. "It works against many people's religious values. Most Americans' religious and secular values hold gross inequality to be unacceptable."

Making Less (Unless You're Wealthy)

| Wage Bracket: | 10th Percentile | 30th Percentile | 50th Percentile | 70th Percentile | 90th Percentile | 95th Percentile |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Earning Level 1979-1999: | -9.3 Percent | -2.4 Percent | -0.2 Percent | 1.0 Percent | 11.7 Percent | 17.6 Percent |

Since 1979, workers making the lowest wages have seen the biggest decrease in earnings, while the income of the nation's wealthiest 5 percent skyrocketed by 17.6 percent.

Helping Children Cope in the Wake of Terrorist Attacks

Our children have already been affected. They have seen the terrible pictures and heard adults in their lives talking about the tragedies. Many are feeling distress. It is important to provide help as soon as possible after the event, but what can we do as parents and adults?

"Parents can help their children by talking to them, keeping them close and even spoiling them for a little while," says Holly Harrington, a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) official who manages the FEMA for Kids program. "We also advise that children not be overexposed to the news coverage of terrorist events."

Discussing terrorism with children is very difficult because providing them with safety guidelines to protect themselves is virtually impossible. Psychologists tell us, however, that questions about terrorism are teaching opportunities.

Dr. Lennis Echterling, from the Department of Psychology at James Madison University in Virginia, advises adults to provide understandable information and realistic assurances when answering questions about danger and risks. Don't overwhelm them with information. "Offer them what they are looking for--and nothing else," says Echterling. "Our answers should address both the intellectual and emotional needs communicated by the question."

Some children may never show distress because they don't feel upset, while others may not give evidence of being upset for weeks or even months. Many children may not show changes in behavior, but may still need help in coping with their experiences.

According to FEMA, children may exhibit the following behaviors after a disaster:

- Change from being quiet, obedient and caring to loud, noisy and aggressive or many change from being outgoing to shy and afraid.
- Develop nighttime fears, have nightmares or bad dreams.
- Be afraid the event will reoccur.
- Become easily upset, cry and whine.
- Lose trust in adults. After all, their adults were not able to control the disaster.
- Revert to younger behavior such as bed-wetting and thumb sucking.
- Not want parents out of their sight and refuse to go to school or childcare.
- Have symptoms of illness, such as headaches, vomiting or fever.
- Worry about where they and their family will live.

Things that you can do to help include:

- Talking with children about how they are feeling and listening without judgement.
- Letting children take their time to figure things out. Don't rush them.
- Helping them learn to use words that express their feelings, such as happy, sad, angry or mad.
- Assuring children that you will be there to take care of them. Reassure them often.
- Staying together as a family as much as possible.
- Letting them have some control, such as choosing what outfit to wear or what meal to have for dinner.
- Encouraging children to give or send pictures they have drawn or things they have written.
- Helping children regain faith in the future by helping them develop plans for activities that will take place later--next week, etc.
- Allowing children to grieve losses.

For more information and ideas on helping children cope with terrorism and other disasters, check out www.fema.gov/kids.

The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Effects on Working Women

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when manufacturing workers who lose their job are able to find new jobs, they suffer pay cuts of about nine percent on the average. If you are an older worker or live in rural areas it is quite possible you will not be able to find a new job.

How many good paying manufacturing jobs have been lost to unequal trade under NAFTA? Since July of 2000 there has been a loss of 675,000 manufacturing jobs. In 1999 more than 3,500 plants employed 1.2 million workers, and that number is increasing daily, at Maquiladoras plants in Mexico. In the early days women made up as much as 80 percent of the assembly plant workforce, today the number is close to 60 percent. While they can be legally hired at the age of 16, it is not uncommon for these young women to get false documents in order to go to work at ages as young as 12, 13, or 14. (Some youth get permission from parents and authorities to work legally at the age of 14). Most of them will leave the plants before they reach the age of 30. To get and keep their jobs, at many plants, the young women must submit to medical examinations to prove that they are not pregnant. During working hours at the plant it is not uncommon for women workers to be sexually harassed, are demanded to do sexual favors in order to keep their jobs, get a pay raise, transfer, or a promotion.

The cost of these jobs to workers under NAFTA without a doubt is poverty wages, children with birth defects, as a result of poor health

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The Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the Effects on Working Women

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and safety standards and a polluted environment.

Trade gives many benefits, but it also needs to have a lot of careful attention in order to continue to make sure there's equity for women throughout the hemisphere. FTAA based on the failed NAFTA model only will accelerate the destruction of U.S. manufacturing jobs. Our trade policy must not offer U.S. companies incentives to move offshore and must ensure we maintain a strong manufacturing sector. New trade agreements must ensure that all workers can freely exercise their fundamental rights and require governments to respect, promote, and enforce core labor standards.

What can you do?

The current FTAA contains no protection for workers' rights and only increases the power of corporations to exploit workers. Educate yourself and union members about FTAA, "fast track" trade authority.

Look at the trade records of your political candidates and representatives. Contact your Congressman or Senator tell him/her that fast track authority is the wrong way to go. Tell them to support workers' rights and fight for everyone to earn a livable wage with benefits. Contact business leaders ask them why the business roundtable opposes presidential trade negotiating authority legislation that would call for the President to negotiate trade agreements containing labor or environmental provisions.

PACE International Union, P.O. Box 1475, Nashville, TN 37202.

Tell Your Senators to Pass Real Relief for Laid-Off Workers Now!

Lets help working Americans out in the time of need. Please send this letter to your Senators in hope they pass real relief for laid-off workers.

Dear (Your Senators):

Adding to the 1.1 million layoffs in 2001, more than 574,000 workers are reliving the terrorist attacks in the economic aftermath of September 11. At the same time, Congress has yet to provide the worker relief and economic stimulus America's workers desperately need. Some are exploiting the urgent need for this legislation to gain special-interest tax breaks they have sought for years.

I am writing to urge you to pass economic stimulus legislation immediately to provide real relief for workers, including enhanced unemployment insurance benefits, federal subsidies to pay COBRA premiums, and federal aid to states so they can continue to deliver vital public services.

The Senate economic stimulus bill should expand eligibility for unemployment compensation to help the 60 percent of laid-off workers who don't qualify in most states. And it should boost the weekly benefit and provide an additional 26 weeks of benefits so workers have longer to find a job during this recession. Emergency extended benefits are a proven recession-fighter, which Congress passed four times during the 1990-1991 recession. The Senate bill also must help unemployed workers keep their health insurance coverage. A federal subsidy of 75 percent of the premium cost would keep 80 percent of unemployed workers from losing their health coverage.

Instead of helping those most in need, the \$100 billion House stimulus bill contains massive tax cuts for business. The House bill not only is unfair, it is ineffective as a stimulus. Cash assistance to laid-off workers--so they can pay their mortgages and buy food, clothing, and other necessities--is the only way to get our economy moving again.

When the Senate passed the airline bailout bill and then the airport security bill--both without any assistance for the 140,000 aviation workers facing layoffs--we were promised that Congress would turn quickly to a worker relief bill. Instead, the House passed another tax cut for corporations and the rich.

Please use your vote in the Senate to ensure that this outrage is not repeated.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

The Union Member's Complete Guide

Finally, an easy-to-read book that explains everything new union members and prospective members need to know about unions and unionism. It's also a great resource for members who've never fully understood how unions work and their rights and responsibilities as members.

The Union Member's Complete Guide answers the most common questions about unions and encourages workers to get more involved as members. Topics covered in the 172-page, fully indexed book include:

- How your union operates
- A member's rights and responsibilities
- How a union contract is negotiated--and how to have an impact on the process
- Every union's responsibility to its members
- The full story on union dues
- How to get the union's help if you get in trouble
- Your union's role in the community
- How to file a grievance
- Workplace laws that affect every member
- And much, much more

Author of *The Union member's Complete Guide* is Michael Mauer, a veteran union organizer, negotiator, service director (and attorney) with more than 25 years' experience with the National Labor Relations Board and public and private sector unions. The invaluable resource includes a glossary of labor terms, a full directory of the nation's unions, and a comprehensive list of helpful contacts for union members and working people. Offered by Union Communication Services, Inc., publishers of the popular *Union Steward's Complete Guide*, *Steward Update Newsletter*, and monthly labor news and graphics services.

In praise of *The Union Member's Complete Guide*:

"A practical, well-written primer on unions and collective bargaining for union members and potential union members."

--Ray Marshall, former U.S. Secretary of Labor

"A valuable, easy-to-use resource for union members and any worker who wants to understand what unions do and how they do it. Written in plain, everyday language, this book's illustrations, examples, and brief stories, along with its user friendly layout, make it the best guide of its kind available today."

--Ronald J. Peters, Director, Labor Education Program, Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"*The Union Member's Complete Guide* is a terrific resource for new union members who have little understanding of how unions work, what dues are used for, what their roles are as union members, and much, much more. It's a great foundation for reaching out to potential members conducting new member orientations and inspiring and motivating current members. I highly recommend this book."

--Susan M. Washington, Director, AFL-CIO Department of Education

"This is an outstanding guide to the basics of unionism, a very useful reference not just for new members and those considering unionism but for business agents, organizers, and stewards as well. It offers a great overview of organized labor and gives a clear look at how it benefits those who belong."

--David Treanor, Director of Research and Education, International Union of Operating Engineers

"This book presents a comprehensive and readable account of the basic rights of unions and their members. It takes what can sometimes seem complicated and makes it easy to understand. If your goal is to learn about the unionized workplace and how working in a union environment might affect you, this is a good place to look."

--Fred Feinstein, former general counsel, National Labor Relations Board

Ordering Information:

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