

Is President Trump A Friend to American Workers?

By Paul Shearon and Matt Biggs

Back in 2016, Donald Trump campaigned as a friend of American workers. The “blue-collar billionaire” pledged to raise the minimum wage and bring jobs back to our shores. A major theme of his campaign was standing up for working people who have been forgotten by powerful elites. “I like them better than the rich people,” he told an AP reporter during the campaign.

Trump’s campaign promises – unusual for a Republican – helped him achieve a surprise victory. As we observe Labor Day, it’s time to measure the president’s words against his actions of the last three years.

Candidate Trump backed a \$10 **minimum wage**. But as president he’s been conspicuously silent on the issue, even during the two years the GOP controlled both houses of Congress. The federal minimum wage has been stuck at \$7.25 since 2007. This, despite the fact that in cities where the minimum wage was boosted to \$10 and above, or \$15 in the case of Seattle, the loss of jobs that critics predicted would result never materialized, according to [a University of California study](#).

What about the promise to bring back **American jobs**? Speaking in Youngstown, Ohio in July 2017, President Trump said: “Those jobs (that) have left Ohio, they’re coming back. They’re all coming back. Don’t move, don’t sell your house.” [General Motors has since announced it will close five plants](#), including one in nearby Lordstown. Thanks to the UAW union contract, GM workers have the right to transfer elsewhere in the company, but the Trump administration has no plan for replacing lost jobs in struggling industrial areas.

Has the president stood up for the little guy? In our cutthroat economy, the best way for an individual to have leverage against the enormous power of employers is to form a union. In both the public and private sector, collective bargaining gives workers an effective voice in decisions that matter.

President Trump claims to speak for everyday workers but he is constantly [attacking our basic workplace rights](#).

An affiliate of our own union is a perfect case in point. The National Association of Immigration Judges (NAIJ), representing the nation's 440 immigration judges, has called attention to an unworkable backlog of more than 830,000 immigration cases. NAIJ also has raised questions about a quota system imposed on judges of 700 cases per year, per judge, and what that means for the due process rights of those who have cases in these courts.

Rather than working with judges and their union to improve the courts, the Trump administration [is trying to decertify the union](#) by absurdly claiming that immigration judges are “managers” not entitled to collective bargaining. Judges don't have the authority to order pencils let alone set policy or make hire/fire decisions. This attack is nothing more than an attempt to gag workers, place a thumb on the scales of justice and bust a union.

Our union, the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), also represents other highly skilled technical and professional employees in the federal workforce, including rocket scientists at NASA, administrative law judges at the Social Security Administration, and engineers at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Navy. Rather than work with us productively, President Trump has issued unilateral executive orders designed to severely limit longstanding statutory and contractual rights – including our ability to fight back against harassment, intimidation and other unfair treatment – and our ability to blow the whistle when taxpayer dollars are misused.

Workers in the private sector also have been negatively affected by Trump's policies. IFPTE has thousands of members in Canada and on this side of the border who have been hurt by our chaotic trade policies caused by the president's constant flip-flopping.

Also, in the private sector, 25,000 engineers at the Boeing Corporation are members of our affiliate, SPEEA/IFPTE Local 2001. Our union strongly supports the right of all workers at Boeing to join a labor organization of their own choosing. So, we were outraged when Boeing unjustly

fired six union supporters who were part of an International Association of Machinists' (IAM) organizing drive at a Boeing plant in South Carolina.

In August, the National Labor Relations Board found merit in claims of wrongful termination, and Boeing will go on trial unless it promptly reinstates these employees. Members of the [U.S. House](#) and [Senate](#) have applauded the NLRB for enforcing the law against a major corporation illegally using its power to silence ordinary workers and deny their legal rights. But where is the outrage of our “friend” President Trump? We haven’t heard a peep from the Tweeter-in-Chief.

And even if he did send a message, no social media storm can overcome Trump’s actual labor record of stagnant wages, lost jobs, and pervasive attack on workplace rights.

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