



December 3, 2009

Dear Friend,

Our November 13-14 National Conference to Create Living Wage Jobs, Meet Human Needs and Sustain the Environment greatly exceeded our expectations. Over 125 attendees came representing over 50 organizations. The diversity of attendees was as impressive as their numbers. People came from Atlanta, Chicago, California and many points in between. Participating organizations spanned the broad range of constituencies we need to mobilize to achieve the conference goals of jobs for all at a living wage. The religious community, labor, community non-profits and employment policy experts all participated.

The passion that the speakers, panelists and audience members expressed at the conference was contagious. Equally striking to us was the widespread agreement on the essential components of a jobs program: that besides promoting a decent, living wage job for all who want to work, it should be long-term, address the shortfall of social investment and the lack of the human services needed to build a good society, and include a significant role for the public sector.

So, where do we go from here?

We -- and attendees like you -- have lots of ideas. There have been suggestions that similar events be held in other parts of the country so that those who came to NYC can kindle the excitement about a jobs program in their own region. Others are urging development of legislative proposals as the basis of a national political campaign. President Obama is holding a jobs summit at the White House today that offers an opportunity to advance the jobs agenda into the national policy debate. And there is talk of a mass mobilization for jobs in D.C. sometime in late 2010 or early 2011.

All of these -- and more -- ideas are good ones. We are excited by the willingness of so many to stay involved on this issue. We are writing to ask if you would continue to work with us on the goal of achieving living wage jobs for all of

our people. We envision an ongoing grassroots and national advocacy network, led by a Continuation Committee representing the array of groups and constituencies that were with us in NYC. This Continuation Committee would have several functions:

* Communication & Coordination -- the Continuation Committee will provide a vehicle for sharing information among us on the wide range of local and state initiatives on jobs, and provide a means to coordinate between different locales to increase the impact of actions that have been initiated in one place and that others find useful.

* Organizing and Outreach – The Committee would also work to recruit additional religious, labor, community and policy organizations to form an ongoing national advocacy network that supports public job creation and social investment.

* Tools Development and Resource Center -- The Continuation Committee would also lead efforts to compile resources and ideas that could be drawn upon by groups around the country in their work. A variety of proposals were made to carry out local “demonstration projects” to raise the visibility of the jobs crisis and engage community members. We can create and disseminate simple tools such as local unemployment report cards, resolutions for state and local legislatures, guides to organizing community hearings and “truth commissions,” community jobs needs assessments, etc.

* Strategy Development, Resource Mobilization, and Organizing -- Finally, and most ambitiously, the Committee could be charged with developing a political strategy around the living wage jobs for all agenda, and developing a political campaign on this issue that is strong and vibrant at the grassroots, but fully national in its scope. The committee will also need to secure funding and mobilize resources to support the proposed organizing campaign, and ensure we are able to do broad outreach to the many affected communities and groups who are concerned about jobs issues.

We have revised our Conference Call to Action to accommodate the new, ongoing organizing focus outlined above. We therefore have four requests:

1. Will you please endorse the revised Call to Action, so we may continue to list your name/organization as a supporter of the proposed advocacy network?

2. Please indicate whether you would be willing to serve on the network’s Continuation Committee and/or Steering Group, and any particular areas you can help with, such as organizing and outreach, convening local or regional meetings or conferences, public policy analysis, and/or fundraising.

3. Please recommend 2-3 other organizations or individuals you think should

be invited to endorse the Call to Action and join the network.

4. Please share any additional thoughts and ideas that you have for how we can follow up on the conference, and continue momentum toward development of a powerful social movement for economic renewal. (NOTE: if you have additional drafting suggestions or recommendations for additional points or policy recommendations to include in the Call to Action, please let us know that as well.)

In solidarity,

Bill Barclay, Chicago Political Economy Group

Chuck Bell, Conference Chair, and Vice Chair, National Jobs for All Coalition

Larry Bresler, Executive Director, Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign*

Rev. Dr. James A. Forbes, Senior Pastor Emeritus, Riverside Church of New York, Pres., Healing of the Nations Foundation

Barbara George, Healing of the Nations Foundation

Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg, Chair, National Jobs for All Coalition

Logan Martinez, Miami Valley Full Employment Council/Organize Ohio (Dayton, OH)

Bill Quigley, Executive Director, Center for Constitutional Rights

Annie Rawlings, Associate Executive Presbyter for Social Witness, Presbytery of New York City*

Elce Redmond, Organizer, South Austin Community Coalition (Chicago, IL)

Melvin Rothenberg, Chicago Political Economy Group

Rev. Marcel Welty (New York, NY)

* Organization listed for identification purposes only

CALL TO ACTION

National Network to Create Living Wage Jobs for All, Meet Human Needs & Sustain the Environment [working name]

Our country is in the throes of an economic crisis—the most severe since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unemployment is at the disaster level. And even before the onset of our current, deep recession, chronic unemployment, low and stagnant wages, myriad unmet needs and unprecedented environmental degradation were endemic.

Current Job Crisis

* Nearly 31 million workers fully or partially jobless (October 2009)

* Most rapid job loss of any downturn -- and the highest percentage of long-term unemployed workers --since the Great Depression

- * 8 million fewer jobs in the U.S. economy since the onset of the recession.
- * High unemployment expected to persist, even if the economy “recovers.”
- * Many of the long-term unemployed will lose benefits, their savings, their homes and more

Weak Stimulus

By the Administration’s own estimate, the economic stimulus package enacted in February 2009 will only make up for a fraction of the millions of jobs lost since the recession began. Nor will the stimulus stem the continuing job hemorrhage.

The health and well-being of workers and communities suffer greatly when there is inadequate availability of living wage jobs. In addition, the current official high unemployment rate of over 10% is exceedingly costly to the economy as a whole, costing \$1 trillion or more annually in output of goods and services. As former Nobel Prize winner Robert Eisner has pointed out, a nation that tolerates high levels of unemployment is “literally throwing away its potential output.”

The “Good Old Days”

Even before the recent economic meltdown, 5 million or more women and men were officially jobless; hidden unemployment afflicted many millions more; and poverty wages were rampant. Inequality reigned, our infrastructure was crumbling, and human services fell far short of needs.

We must not go back to those “Good Old Days.” Instead, we should be guided by President Franklin D. Roosevelt (1933): “We cannot be content, no matter how high the general standard of living may be, if some fraction of our people ... is ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed, and insecure.”

Real Reform

Now is the time to organize and mobilize to create a just economy.

We call for:

- * Establishment of a long-term, permanent federal jobs program, leading to the legal right to a living wage job.

- * Creation of millions of new, publicly-financed living-wage jobs in education and human services, clean energy and environmental conservation, and infrastructure development and repair.

- * Priority measures to target new jobs to employ structurally unemployed and underemployed workers, including people living in economically depressed communities, young people, people of color, people with disabilities, ex-

offenders, and immigrants, among others.

* Guaranteed income support for those who are unemployed, unable to work, and/or doing vital work in the home (including extension of unemployment benefits, an end to TANF time limits, and support for single adults living without adequate income)

* Continuation and expansion of federal assistance to ailing state governments, to preserve essential services and prevent further job loss in local communities.

* Comprehensive protection of workers' labor and social rights, including the right to organize, form trade unions and bargain collectively; the right to equal opportunity, with vigorous enforcement of laws and regulations relating to unfair discrimination in hiring and employment against women, people of color and other minorities; worker safety and health; rights to paid sick leave and vacations; and decent working conditions and quality of work life, including autonomy on the job.

* Development of industrial and trade policies to promote comprehensive recovery of the manufacturing and services sectors, and other, complementary policies to promote full employment, community economic stability, environmental sustainability, and a fair global economic system.

* Fair financing for economic renewal through 1) discontinuing or not renewing the Bush-era tax cuts for wealthy taxpayers; 2) reducing military spending to genuine defense needs, and redirecting the savings to the civilian economy 3) enacting a financial speculation tax on short-term securities transactions; and 4) recapturing federal revenue as more Americans return to work and pay taxes, and the devastating financial and social costs of unemployment are avoided.

* Comprehensive measures to ensure public accountability and transparency for the jobs program and public investments, including 1) racial, gender, geographic and social equity in program spending and results and 2) establishment of a national employment accounting office to measure the impact and benefits.

To achieve these goals, we will work together to

1. Document unmet public needs for jobs, infrastructure and public services
2. Inform and educate our communities about those needs, and how can they be addressed through our proposed program
3. Organize a strong, vibrant social movement to inspire grassroots action and arouse the conscience of the public
4. Encourage policy organizations to support this program, and related initiatives to expand availability of living wage jobs, and protect worker rights

5. Develop an effective national advocacy network by reaching out to a wide range of labor, religious, nonprofit and community organizations, and building coalitions and alliances
6. Mobilize regional and national demonstrations in support of this program
7. Design and advocate comprehensive federal legislation to achieve the right to employment at living wages, and develop alliances with members of Congress and other public officials who will support these measures
8. Provide ongoing public oversight of the development and implementation of our proposed program

YES!! I/we endorse the Call to Action and Join the Network to Create Living-Wage Jobs for All, Meet Human Needs, & Sustain the Environment

- Individual Endorsement
- List organization for affiliation only
- Do not list organization
- Organizational Endorsement

Name: _____

Organizational
Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Web
Site: _____

YES, I would be willing to serve on the Continuation Committee

YES, I would be willing to serve on the Continuation's Committee's
Steering Group

_____ YES, I would be willing to serve on a committee or workgroup on:

_____ Please send the Call to Action to the following individuals/organizations:

1)

Name: _____

Organizational
Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

2)

Name: _____

Organizational
Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

3)

Name: _____

Organizational
Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please return to: JobsConference@njfac.org

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