

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

ADDRESSING THE JOB CRISIS

A CONVERSATION WITH
AFL-CIO PRESIDENT RICHARD L. TRUMKA

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PARTICIPANTS:

Welcome:

STROBE TALBOTT
President
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

RICHARD L. TRUMKA
President
AFL-CIO

Moderator:

DARRELL WEST
Vice President and Director, Governance Studies
The Brookings Institution

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good morning, everybody. I'm Strobe Talbott of the Brookings Institution, and it's my great pleasure to welcome you here today. And it's also a particular pleasure to be able to welcome our speaker, Rich Trumka.

Rich has devoted his entire professional life to the labor movement. He's a third-generation miner, he spent 15 years as the head of the United Mine Workers Union. In short, I think you could say that his job for all these many years has been looking out for other people's jobs. And the same can be said for John Sweeney, one of his predecessors at the AFL-CIO. It's great to have you here with us this morning, and Jim Boland of the Bricklayers Union.

And the same statement I just made about those three gentlemen can also be made about John Wilhelm, who is the president of UNITE HERE, and very importantly, one of our trustees here at Brookings, and, therefore, one of my bosses. When I first met John, and that was, I calculated this morning, 45 years ago, he was hard at work organizing service and maintenance employees on a university campus where we were both hanging out at the time. Having John on the Brookings Board of Trustees, and having President Trumka on this podium this morning, underscores our commitment here at Brookings to the importance of having the voice and the perspective of organized labor as part of our national effort to come together and solve the jobs crisis, which is, it should be noted, not just a national crisis, it's also a global one.

Unemployment, especially unemployment among youth, fueled the Arab Awakening at the beginning of this year. It is fueling right now the populous backlash against the political status quo in capitalist democracies in many parts of the world, including, of course, notably in Europe.

Because the jobs issue is so pervasive and because it is so consequential, both for individuals, as well as for whole societies, and, indeed, for the

whole world, it is a major focus of the work in all five of our research programs here at the Brookings Institution.

Our scholars are looking for new ways to meet the needs and promote the aspirations of all citizens, especially the least well off, and they're looking for new ways to encourage investment and long-term, sustainable, export-driven economic growth that will revive the jobs market.

The head of one of our programs, Darrell West, vice president and director of Governance Studies, will lead a discussion once we have heard from our guest of honor. But now, Rich, the podium is yours.

MR. TRUMKA: Thanks, Strobe, for that very kind introduction, and thank all of you for coming here this morning. I guess I'd start off by saying for almost a century, the Brookings Institute has provided independent research and innovative recommendations and solutions to problems that the country, and, quite frankly, the world were experiencing. I think that's why President Franklin Delano Roosevelt commissioned a Brookings study to understand the underlying causes of the Great Depression. Well, here we are today, we're discussing the causes and the cures of the worst economic crisis since the 1930s.

And it seems crystal clear to me that we don't have a debt crisis, we have a jobs crisis. America isn't broke, but America's basic promise and ever-rising, ever-widening prosperity is being broken. Counting all the casualties on the jobs crisis, our real unemployment rate is over 16 percent right now. Earlier generations of economists would have called that a depression. The nation has lost almost 7 million jobs since December 2007, and another 4 million jobs that should have been created as people entered the labor force, giving us an 11 million jobs hole in our labor market. And, quite frankly, that number should be on every bulletin board and every screensaver in every public policymaker's office every day.

And this is not an equal opportunity recession. The official unemployment rate is 16.7 percent among African Americans, 11.3 percent among Hispanics, 23 percent among teenagers.

But this, quite frankly, this jobs crisis isn't only about cold statistics, because work isn't just what we do. Work, quite frankly, is who we are. It's how we support ourselves and our loved ones, it's how we connect with our fellow men and women, it's how we contribute to the world, and it is how we leave our legacy.

So when one in six people can't find work that define and dignifies their lives, the harm that results is lasting and deep. It's lasting and deep for individuals, it's lasting and deep for our families, quite frankly, it's lasting and deep for our entire polity. And if policymakers and policy elites are indifferent to the deepening suffering, the public will look to answers anywhere that they can find them. Purveyors of irrational hatred will step into the void, making it more difficult to solve the very problems that are polarizing our politics.

See, today's economic crisis has roots that date back a generation. For three decades we've pursued a contradiction: a low-wage, high-consumption economic strategy. Our trade policies have depleted our manufacturing base, our tax policies promoted inequality and rewarded wealth over work, leaving us without enough money to fund our public infrastructure or the education and training that we need in a global economy.

And now we see conscious and coordinated efforts to de-legitimize government and to destroy unions and other progressive voices in order to eliminate countervailing powers to corporate interests.

See, in the recent release of the Census Bureau's poverty and income statistics, we see how these policies have downsized the American dream. For the first time since the Great Depression, most Americans lost ground between 1997 and 2010. So after a generation of wage stagnation, the rich really are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer and the middle class, well, it's on life support right now. While

household incomes declined in 2010, CEO pay jumped up by 27 percent. Now, why were so many CEO's getting double-digit raises while working Americans were up against double-digit unemployment? And in the land of plenty, the official poverty rate is 15.1 percent. That's the highest in a half a century. Think about that.

One out of five children -- one out of five of our children -- live in poverty right now. How can school children win a race to the top while the economy is running a race to the bottom? So with -- obviously, with unemployment and poverty rising, inequality is increasing, as well.

It's sobering to note that the median wealth for African-American households has fallen by two-thirds since 1983. It now stands at about \$2,200. Think about that: median wealth for African Americans, \$2,200. It's about 99,000 for white Americans.

Meanwhile, the right wing populism is being fueled by the anger and the frustration of working men and women who are watching their jobs disappear and their paychecks decline. As Adam Looney of the Brookings Institute and Michael Greenstone of the Hamilton Project have reported, the median real earnings of working men of all races, age 25 to 64, declined 28 percent between 1969 and 2009. Twenty-eight percent decline in standard of living. And for men without college degrees, the median earnings declined by 47 percent. And even college graduate men's earnings declined by 12 percent. Quite frankly, it's only women's entry into the workforce that's kept families from falling more desperately behind.

So in this era of remarkable technology and innovations and productivity growth, Americans are working harder and they're working smarter, while most families are still losing ground. They play by all the rules and get further behind.

And the fault, quite frankly, is not with working people. The problem is that public policies just aren't delivering what they say they would. And we need to rethink some of the assumptions that have distorted the debates and the decisions of the past 30 years. And today I want to talk about three of them.

I want to talk about the cult of the cooperation, I want to talk about the faith in free trade, and I want to talk about the addiction to austerity. See, almost 60 years ago, "Engine Charlie" Wilson, who went from CEO of GM to Secretary of Defense, memorably declared that what is good for General Motors is good for America. And we chaffed at that at the time, but in many ways, he was right. See, back in the '50s, General Motors' profits were shared with its unionized work force, lifting production workers into the world's first middle class majority in history. Sixty years later, President Obama's rescue of the American auto industry has saved tens of thousands of jobs, not only in the Detroit Big Three companies, but in all companies that supply the industry and serve its employees.

See, with the new collective bargaining agreement between GM and the autoworkers, the workers will gain or share in the gains that they worked so hard and sacrificed so much to achieve. Many multinational companies want to be treated as American institutions while they treat the Stars and Stripes as a flag of convenience.

Think about this: The big brand name companies that employ one-fifth of America's workforce, while they cut their U.S. workforces by 2.9 million during the 2000s, while increasing employment overseas by 2.4 million, that's a big switch from the '90s, see, when they added jobs everywhere. In the '90s, they added 4.4 million jobs in the U.S. and 2.7 million jobs abroad. So U.S.-based global corporations simply no longer have the same interests as domestic businesses and as the American people. Now, this is a fact about the new global economy, where capital is mobile, where labor is not, and it should shape our government's response when these same global firms demand lower taxes, less regulations, and more free trade deals.

See, America is our people first, from steelworkers to software writers. Our country's resources are our infrastructure, our education system, our natural resources, and the businesses whose operations are actually located here, whoever owns them, and whatever alphabet their corporate logo are written in. Public policy should be focused on improving our competitiveness as a nation and not on improving

the cash flow of global enterprises that are ultimately indifferent to our fate as a nation community.

So when we consider how to reshape our economic policies, such as corporate tax rules, let's remember to reward the companies that invest and produce in America. And the surest way to move jobs out of America is to let corporations pay lower tax on the profits that were earned overseas than they pay on profits that were earned here in the United States. And it's also time to have a 21st century reality-based trade policy. Now, we can talk all we want about free trade, comparative advantage, free markets, but our competitors, to their credit, are consciously pursuing national economic strategies while we're borrowing almost a half a trillion dollars every year from the rest of the world just to buy the goods that we used to make right here.

See, the Chinese government manipulates its currency to hold down the prices of its products throughout the world. The Chinese government's unique style of engagement in the global economy undermines both international trade rules and all of our best efforts to rebuild our manufacturing sector. As the Economic Policy Institute and the Alliance for American Manufacturing recently reported, our imbalance trade with China has cost the United States more than 2.8 million jobs since 2001, including 1.8 million manufacturing jobs.

But I've got to be clear. Our relationship with China is about more than currency. See, a prosperous China could be an enormous boom to the United States and to the global economy but only if workers can build a middle class life, and they can have a strong voice through independent unions, and if the Chinese Government plays by the same rules.

See, the question is what is our government strategy for ensuring that our relationship with China is mutually beneficial and not a zero sum game played by unfair rules where workers both in China and the United States are sacrificed to corporate interest? See these kinds of questions are not just limited to China.

Congress will soon consider three agreements with South Korea, with

Columbia, and with Panama. The Korean deal will boost Korea as an export platform to the United States and it'll likely cost almost 160,000 U.S. jobs. But the real killer is Columbia. Almost every week I see come across my desk the face of a new dead Columbian trade unionist or another dead priest who preached the gospel of Jesus, the Carpenter.

And once again I ask you, if 51 CEOs had been assassinated in Columbia last year instead of 51 trade unionists and nothing had been done about it and no one had even been charged, do you think we'd be signing a trade deal with Columbia right now? We happen to think the trade unionists' lives are every bit as important as CEO lives.

See, we also need to reconsider the economic baseless idea that deficits are the problem and austerity is the answer. Four Fridays ago we learned that unemployment was stuck at 9.1 percent and the interest rate for 10-year bonds was approaching a record low. Now, if the nation really were in danger of a debt crisis, the interest rates on U.S. bonds would be climbing, not cratering.

Take a look at Greece. See, we have a massive jobs crisis that's caused by collapsing demand and austerity will make it worse, not better. The economic crisis and the growing budget deficit created an opening for Tea Party extremists and the hypocritical obstructionism of congressional Republicans. And they succeeded in creating a fake fiscal crisis last summer that needlessly jeopardized our country's credit.

See there's a difference between phony crisis and real ones. Our challenge today is preserving jobs and creating new ones, not throwing people out of work and cutting off essential services and benefits. As the new managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde has explained budgetary austerity should not be pursued at the cost of economic growth.

One shovel-ready project we don't need is to dig ourselves deeper in a hole with the same failed policy that got us into the ditch to begin with. Common sense would tell us that we ought to stop digging. See, we need a bold new approach that

creates 21st century jobs and invests in 21st century technologies, and the skills, and the strength that America needs to make the most of them.

Now, President Obama's jobs bill puts America on the right path and Congress, I believe, should pass it right away and then do more, because if we have the will to tackle the jobs crisis, there's no mystery about how to do it. And I'll outline six pillars very quickly.

First, we need to rebuild America's schools and transportation and energy system. That investment in infrastructure that we direly need will put millions of people to work while literally laying the foundations for long-term economic growth and competitiveness. We can start by renewing the Building Star Program to create jobs by installing energy-saving technology. We need an infrastructure bank to fund public infrastructure. But that infrastructure bank must have a Buy America and Davis-Bacon safeguards so that American tax dollars create good family-supporting American jobs, not jobs somewhere else. And Congress must enact the fully funded Surface Transportation Act Reauthorization to support millions of jobs and to build a cleaner, safer, more efficient 21st century transportation system.

Second, we need to revive American manufacturing and to stop exporting good jobs overseas. We need to end currency manipulation by China and other countries. We need to reform our trade policies and end the tax incentives that encourage and reward the off shoring of manufacturing jobs. We can't afford to replace trickle-down economics with trickle-out economics.

Third, we need to put people in the hardest hit communities back to work, especially in communities of color. Their unemployment rates are two and sometimes three times the average. We need to do it with direct targeted government hiring. It's time to face the truth that in a deep economic crisis only government can put people back to work on the scale necessary to revive our economy and get it out of these doldrums.

Fourth, President Obama is right to call for more aid to state and local

governments to prevent more cutbacks in public services because the enormous fiscal stimulus that we've seen is being negated by the contraction of state and local governments to the point where it's negated or negative right now. Public layoffs are dragging down the economy and they're making a double-dipper session far more likely. Congress should not lay off any more federal employees and should prevent additional state and local layoffs. Police officers, firefighters, health care workers, and public service workers of all kinds, quite frankly, deserve medals, not layoff notices.

Fifth, we need to reform Wall Street so that Main Street can create jobs. The financial sector is supposed to channel capital to productive sectors of the economy, but Wall Street diverts far too many resources from the productive economy and it endangers the global economy with its reckless gambling. The Administration should support and Congress should pass legislation to encourage more lending to small businesses. And we should enact the financial speculation tax to discourage harmful speculation and to make Wall Street pay to rebuild the economy that it helped destroy, just as the European Union is doing. And we must enact and enforce tough safeguards to stop the kind of fraud that caused the crisis in the first place.

Sixth and finally, we need to restore consumer demand and jumpstart our economy by extending unemployment compensation and keeping homeowners in their homes. You see, Congress and the Administration should provide for mandatory reduction of principle for homeowners facing foreclosure through bankruptcy reform, through mandatory mediation, or other means. If banks lower the principle balance of all underwater mortgages to their current market value, more than \$70 billion would be pumped into the economy every year, millions of families would be able to stay in their homes, and over a million jobs would be created in the process.

These past three years have been a winding and rocky road. And President Obama once again is heading the nation, I believe, in the right direction. The labor movement's proud to stand with him as he takes on the challenges of job inequality and investment in the future.

The American Jobs Act is a great start and we'll work hard to shape it, to strengthen it, and build support for us. And we'll build support for sound majors to begin paying for job creation such as the Buffett tax, to make sure that millionaires pay their taxes at rates as high as their employees.

See, America faces historic choices right now that will shape our economy and our society and our democracy for decades to come. The question is not whether President Obama is appealing to his base; it's whether we will rebuild the manufacturing base, which is the foundation of our economy.

The question is not whether the Administration is moving away from the middle; it's whether we'll restore the middle class, which is the heart and the soul of the American dream. What's ultimately at stake is the oldest question in American history: whether we the people can bring our country's course closer to our interests and our values. Together we can continue to work at the Brookings Institute as conducted from its founding during the Progressive era to its groundbreaking research during the Great Depression. As your mission statement declares, we must strengthen American democracy and foster the economic and social welfare and security and opportunity for all Americans.

Well, the labor movement, we'll do our part and we're counting on your intellectual inspiration when we do it right and your constructive criticism when we fall short. I want to thank you for having me today and say I look forward to discussing some things with you in the question-and-answer period. Thank you very much.

MR. WEST: Thank you, President Trumka. I was very interested in hearing your thoughts on our economy and possible policy remedies. It certainly is a challenging time. You pointed out our 15 percent poverty rates, the 28 percent decline in real earnings. So let me start with a couple of questions, and then we'll open the floor to questions and comments from our audience.

I think it is clear that the decline in the power of unions is a major factor in the increasing economic inequality that you highlighted in your talk. But it is hard to

see in the short run how labor can gain a lot of new members quickly and obviously you'd like to change the labor laws to ease organizing.

But in the short run how can the labor movement help workers who are not going to be organized any time soon get a larger share of the economy in terms of higher pay and benefits? And then also, what are the new strategies organized labor is pursuing on behalf of those workers?

MR. TRUMKA: Well, first of all, there are several ways that we can and we do help workers whether they're in any union or they're not. Advocating for increases in middle wage: every time the minimum wage is increased, everybody benefits from that, the benefits that we provide. But we're also reaching out to them right now and bringing them in.

Take people that are excluded from the law, whether they're worker centers, whether they're maids that aren't covered by the law, we've reached out beginning -- we formed partnerships with them, we're helping them organize, finding new ways to be able to negotiate with people to give themselves a much better raise and much better standard of living. Because if you look -- and I just want to highlight one thing. You say, you know, with the fall or the decline of the labor movement was the decline of the middle class. From 1946 to 1973, productivity in the country doubled and so did wages. Unions represented about 40 percent of the workforce back then. We were driving wages for everybody. We drove wages for non-union workers and industry, as well as union workers. So people at the bottom end of the spectrum, their wages were actually increasing higher than people at the top and the wage gap was closing in the country. The middle class was born.

From '73 forward, you've seen productivity increase, but wages have stagnated. There was a conscious decision by many to eliminate regulations to eliminate workers. So from '73 to date, productivity has increased, wages have stagnated, and all of that money, the money between -- that we lost, that didn't go to workers, went to the top 1 percent by and large because the last 20 years, 100 percent of the income gains

have gone to the top 10 percent. In the last 20 years, 56 or 57 percent of all of the income gains have gone to the top 1 percent. In the last 20 years, 30 percent of all of the income gains have gone to the top one-tenth of 1 percent. We represent now about -- percent of the work force. We don't drive those wages for everybody. So, if you're looking to right the economy in the long run -- I don't want to fast forward past this -- you have to look at collective bargaining. See, it has to be part of the solution. Unless you're willing to mandate that workers get X-share out of the pie, collective bargaining is the most flexible, most efficient way to be able to make sure that workers have the money in their pocket to be able to drive the economy, because you know and I know that the economy is 72 percent driven by consumer spending and wages. We did it by borrowing. It doesn't work.

So, we're working with those non-union people in the short run and in the long run. We're trying to drive wages. We're trying to change policies that will give workers a bigger share of the pie and, yes, we're trying to change the labor laws because they are the most antiquated in the world, the most depressive of any industrialized nation. Don't take my word for it. Go talk to the ILO. Go talk to any of the international organizations that gasp when they see the things that go on in the United States. They consider us uncivilized, quite frankly.

MR. WEST: So, you mentioned the collective bargaining laws, and of course recently in Wisconsin and Ohio, we've seen major challenges to collective bargaining. So, I'm just curious, what lessons are we to take from what has happened in Wisconsin and Ohio? In particular, the recalls in Wisconsin dislodged two Republican senators, but yet the Senate still is under GOP control. Was what happened there a defeat or a victory or something else?

MR. TRUMKA: It was a major victory for workers. I mean, take a look at this. We've been trying for three decades to get a national debate about collective bargaining. Scott Walker gave us the national debate that we were looking for, and guess what? Here's the good news. 70-some percent of Americans think every worker,

public or private, ought to have the right to collective bargaining. No one should be able to take it away. That's a win in and of itself.

But let's look at what else happened in Wisconsin. We've organized nine hospitals. We've organized a number of grad students at different universities. We brought 30,000 working American members into the AFL-CIO in working America. We have 8 or 10 unions that are in there organizing right now with each other. There's more solidarity on the ground, there's more determination on the ground than we've seen. We are vibrant. We are up and together.

And here's the real skinny about those elections. In 2008, President Obama won Wisconsin by 14 points. Fourteen points. Those six senators won their elections, Republican elections, by about an equal margin. So, they defied the trend in Wisconsin and got elected by a double-digit margin. We didn't pick those six senators. They were the only six that could be recalled because of the laws.

Now, think about this. We logged collectively, out of those six districts, six of the biggest, highest-performing Republican districts, we got 49 percent-plus of that aggregate electorate and they got a little over 50 percent. Now, I've got to look at it from a strategist -- I've got to say in my 6 best-performing districts, I just broke 50 percent. I've got a problem. And we won. We took two of them out. And by the way, one of the Republican senators voted against that bill, so effectively we have the working majority when it comes to collective bargaining in the Wisconsin Senate.

MR. WEST: So --

MR. TRUMKA: So, we consider that a real victory, by the way.

MR. WEST: Okay. (Applause) So, there's been some discussion in Wisconsin about the possibility of an effort to recall Governor Walker. Would you support that? (Laughter)

MR. TRUMKA: Would I support going after Lucifer? Let me think for a moment. (Laughter) That's a tough one.

Of course we're going to. Of course we're going to be there. I mean, the

guy has overreached. He's been a bad governor. He tried to use a contrived deficit to take people out.

Let me go back to the genesis of all this. This wasn't, like, this state and this state and this state decided that they'd all of a sudden take on labor. Ever hear of the group called ALEC, the American Legislative Economic Council? After the 2010 election, they had a large meeting. They brought in 2,000 Republican state legislators. They had a stack of model bills this big. They said take these bills back to give it out, because our goal is to suppress the progressive vote by 10 percent in the 2012 election. So, they didn't just go after workers. They went after students, they went after immigrants, they went after the elderly. They did these seemingly innocuous voter ID laws. You've got to show a voter ID. What's wrong with that?

Well, let me give you the figures in Wisconsin since we're talking about them. This is a little disenfranchising. You've got to show voter ID? Twenty-four percent of the elderly don't have a voter ID -- they don't have an ID, a government ID; 56 percent of the Hispanic women don't have a government ID; 53 percent of African Americans don't have a voter ID; and 78 percent of African males between the ages of 18 and 24 don't have that ID.

Well, they say that's real simple, you can just go and buy one. Well, first of all, they shut down DMVs on Saturday so that people have to take a day's work to get the DMV and it costs them 20 to \$30. A lot of the elderly don't have 20 to \$30. They say there was no voter fraud in Wisconsin.

This was about suppressing the vote. And this whole attack was about going after every progressive voice that was out there to shut them down, making us defend collective bargaining, making us spend money. Of course, what they didn't count on was the uprising that would happen and they're going to have to spend a whole lot more money than we are. And, quite frankly, I think we're winning.

We have the student -- or the citizens veto in Ohio. We will, I believe, win that citizens veto and stop that from taking act. They did an ID bill in Ohio. We have

enough votes to get that on the ballot, which will stop that voter ID bill from changing the rules for the 2012 election.

But it's -- I wish it were us having a crisis and everybody was genuinely trying to solve the crisis. They're using this to try to take every last player that offers any opposition to their point of view off the playing field, and that, to me, is not the way America functions. That's not the way America operates best. Suppressing the vote isn't something that should be cheered for by the American public. It ought to be condemned for what it is: an attempt to disenfranchise Americans from the democratic system.

MR. WEST: Let me ask one more question, then we'll open the floor to comments from the audience.

In the past, you have expressed some frustration with President Obama, but yet today and elsewhere over the last couple of weeks you have expressed support for his jobs proposal. So, I'm just curious, where does he stand with you? And, more importantly, where do you think he stands with your members right now in the lead-up to the 2012 elections?

MR. TRUMKA: Well, I think he stands in a lot better position than he did three weeks ago. I think if you had asked me three weeks ago I would have said that our members are concerned that he's not leading, and he's not leading and fighting for jobs, because that's what they care about. Not just my members, all Americans out there, all workers. Even workers with a job are concerned, fearful that they'll lose their job. So, job is the number one issue. They want somebody that's going to fight for jobs. They want somebody that's going to go to the mat for jobs. And, quite frankly, I think he made a tactical or a strategic mistake when he started talking about debt reduction and he got into the morass and made that seem like it was the number one issue.

I go to a lot of doors, knocking on doors, visiting members, hearing them on the phone. I could tell you precious, precious few have said we've got to do something about this deficit stuff. (Laughter) You know, it's jobs. We've got to do something about jobs. We've got to do something about health care. We've got to make

sure pensions are there to protect them, Social Security and Medicare. Those are the issues that affect their lives.

So, he made that turn and I think he's now fighting for that. And I think going out to city after city, laying down the gauntlet saying we need jobs, jobs is the most important crisis right now, and if you don't pass them, shame on you, Senate, shame on you, House, for not doing that. I think he's starting to lead. And I think because of that he's in a better position with our members and I think he's in a much better position than, you know, the other side.

I mean, if you look at this stuff that they've proposed, if you look at Mitt Romney's book -- it's 160 pages -- here's what it boils down to: Give rich people more money and take away all the rules and they'll create jobs. That's what it is.

I just want to end with this. Think about this. For eight years George Bush was President, and at the end of his two terms there were fewer jobs in America than when he started being President. And he did every one of the policies that these guys are now advocating: He cut taxes, he took away regulations. He did it all, and it brought us to a crisis. And what's their solution? Let's go back and do it again, maybe it'll happen a different way this time. Well, it won't. And I don't want workers to be the guinea pig one more time. We need somebody that's going to create jobs, not destroy more jobs.

MR. WEST: Okay, let's take some questions from the audience. In the very back, there's a question, the guy with his hand up, standing in back. And we'd ask you if you can give us your name and if you're with an organization. We'd also ask you to keep questions brief so we can get to as many people as possible.

MR. CRIST: Certainly, thank you. Paul Crist. I'm a board member with Americans for Democratic Action.

My question actually has to do with the Occupy Wall Street protests that are going on in New York City. And there's been some recent activity where some union locals are kind of becoming involved in that, and I'm wondering if you have an opinion on,

you know, some of the AFL-CIO national member organizations kind of beginning to take a role in that. Because I sort of think that that street demonstration activity is sort of forcing dialogue on the issues that you're talking about. Just wondered if you have any thoughts on that. Thank you.

MR. TRUMKA: I happen to agree with you. I think being in the streets and calling attention to issues is sometimes the only recourse you have, because God only knows you can go to the Hill and you can talk to a lot of people and see nothing ever happen because it doesn't happen. In the streets I think a lot of people -- and our international unions are involved, our locals are involved, and you'll see a lot of working people, you'll see a lot of small business people, you'll see a lot of manufacturing people that actually produce in this country that are being stepped in the same way by the multinationals and Wall Street. So, I think it's a tactic and it's a valid tactic to call attention to a problem. Wall Street is out of control.

We have three imbalances in this country: the imbalance between imports and exports, the imbalance between employer power and working power, and the imbalance between the real economy and the financial economy. We need to bring back balance to the financial economy, and calling attention to it and peacefully protesting is a very legitimate way of doing it. God only knows I've done it thousands of times myself and may do it again.

MR. WEST: Okay, we have a question here in the front row, Bill Antholis, Brookings.

MR. ANTHOLIS: Hi, President Trumka, thank you again for coming today.

I want to ask about the Jobs Bill and infrastructure and particularly your relationship with the Chamber of Commerce over the years. The AFL-CIO and the Chamber of Commerce haven't always been allies on issues, but on infrastructure you and President Donohoe have said, in the past recently, that you wanted to. I'm wondering both with respect to the Jobs Bill, if you could update us on your alliance with

them with respect to the Jobs Bill, how that's playing out, how you see that playing out, and then on an issue you talked about in the speech, the repatriation of -- two issues you talked about in the speech: one is the repatriation of foreign earnings for corporations but, two, is an infrastructure bank. There is a Brookings proposal to allow that repatriation if it were to fund an infrastructure bank, and I'm just wondering what you would think of that particular point.

MR. TRUMKA: Well, that's -- you gave me a bunch of things to talk about right here. (Laughter) The first part was about the Jobs Bill, and can you just repeat that portion?

MR. ANTHOLIS: Yes. Your work with the Chamber of Commerce on the infrastructure, the infrastructure piece of the Jobs Bill, how you see that part playing out.

MR. TRUMKA: Yeah. Actually Tom and I had a -- we went in and had a brain transplant for both of us. (Laughter) You know, we don't normally agree on many things. That means he's wrong and I'm right, of course. But we don't agree on those things. And on this, it's such a no-brainer.

I mean, look, the country has a \$2.2 trillion infrastructure deficit with old infrastructure, and it has a \$2 trillion deficit with new infrastructure, things that are necessary to get us into the 21st century, like broadband and high-speed rail and a number of -- smart grid and all of those things. It used to be that when you did the reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Pact -- Bill, it was bipartisan. It was a no-brainer, because if you don't build the infrastructure in the country you can't compete. Look what's happened. We went from the top 5 in infrastructure in the world to number 17, and our infrastructure's going down. That means we're less competitive, we're less able to compete, and the hole gets deeper, and the bill gets bigger the longer we put it off.

So whenever I started thinking about it I called Tom and I said, you know, can we go to lunch? And he agreed and, you know, I mean, on a personal basis

Tom's an exceptionally charming and friendly guy and, I mean, he's fun to have lunch with. And I thought maybe we could talk about infrastructure, and we did and he said I agree with you. So, we issued a joint statement together, and we've done some stuff together, and we'll continue to do that.

And I don't think they support -- the Chamber supports the President's Jobs Bill, but I think he'll continue to support infrastructure. How we pay for it? We would probably deviate a little bit. But the need and the skill to get it done, it really is a no-brainer, the country is just slipping further behind every day because our infrastructure is falling apart. Roads, bridges, schools, everything that we need to compete in a global economy is suffering, so, we went back on that. And, I mean, -- and I think he'll continue to support that. He won't support the Jobs Bill, too many things in it that he doesn't agree with. They won't support taxes, any kind of tax increase. They'll support every kind of tax decrease regardless of whether it's deserved or not, but not an increase. So, we'll see what happens with that.

With the repatriation part of it, here's our problem with repatriation. We support an infrastructure bank. I don't know if your proposal has Buy America in it or Davis-Bacon. If it doesn't, we won't support you because an infrastructure bank that takes American tax dollars and buys 90 percent of its stuff from overseas and stimulates their economy ain't a good deal for America. And also one that drives down wages because you use tax dollars to pay less than the prevailing standard, not a good deal for America.

The U.S. Government or state government shouldn't be in the business of driving down wages. They ought to be in the business of raising up wages. So, if it doesn't have any of those things, your bill is deficit right off the bat.

Here's our problem with just a repatriation notion though: Everybody -- the employers take the money off seas -- offshore, they make a bunch of money and they hold it out there, and they wait for a repatriation. The last time we did repatriation, remember what they did with it? Created no jobs, created no infrastructure. They used it to pay dividends and they gave it to CEO salaries that were already bloated. Giving them that reward seems

stupid to me. Letting them pay a lower rate for money they make overseas than what -- the money they pay for here, what would you do? If the rate was 5 percent over there and 25 percent here, what would you do? You put more money over there and knowing every five or six years, there'll be repatriation, we'll get to bring it back on the cheap. That doesn't make sense to me. It doesn't seem a good, long-term policy.

Do we need an infrastructure bank? I think we do. I think we already have one. We have TIFIA, which functions almost like an infrastructure bank, a couple of other programs that do that that we could expand. But if it doesn't buy American, it doesn't pay prevailing wage, I think it's a bad policy because it will drive down and it will stimulate somebody else's economy rather than our economy.

MR. WEST: Right here in the third row. A question? Over here. Yes, right there.

MR. LEWIS: Finlay Lewis with *Congressional Quarterly*.

If you were to read John Kline's press releases, you would think that the NLRB is ground zero in the fight over unionization. The question is: Is there anything that can be done via the NLRB that would have a substantial effect on increasing the decline in union tensity? And, if not, is there any administrative stuff that the government can take that would have that effect?

MR. TRUMKA: Yes, look, the NLRB is limited in what it can do. It can't change the law, and the law is bad. Here's the truth about the law. Any law student that came out of law school graduated last in their class at a cut-rate law school can delay unionization for years. It doesn't take a smart lawyer; the system is designed to prevent it from happening. Every year, 25,000 to 30,000 people are fired illegally for trying to unionize. It takes years to get them back to work. And under the current law, guess what? If you got a job in the interim, they fired you illegally and you got a job in the interim, they deduct all the interim earnings from anything that the employer has to pay back. So, theoretically, if you got a job that paid a nickel an hour more, they wouldn't owe you anything.

What's the disincentive for them to fire people to mute things? So, the law needs to be changed. NLRB can do some things administratively to make elections happen a little faster and a little more fairly. We would hope that they would do that. It's not going to be revolutionary; it's not going to change the system, because they can't change the system. They can do things administratively to make things work a little better administratively. That's what they can do.

Now, I'm glad you asked about the NLRB because that gives me a chance to talk about the assault on the NLRB, and I want to talk about Boeing for a quick second because this has been one of the most amazing things I've ever seen. For 70 years, the law has been that if workers take concerted action and an employer retaliates against them, it violates the law. Well, Boeing, the big, sophisticated space company announces to the world that they're discriminating against these workers because they did concerted activity. Complete violation of the law. For 70 years, no precedent-setting, didn't change any laws, didn't stretch any laws, didn't require any reinterpretation laws, been the rule for 70 years.

Now, think about this. They issued a complaint, which means there's an investigation, and then the case will go to an administrative law judge. Administration law judge is a neutral. Here are the facts, decide whether there's a violation or not. Then it goes to the full National Labor Relations Board and then it goes to the Court of Appeals and then it goes to the Supreme Court. The process has just gotten started, and people like Lindsey Graham and others jump all over this saying this is an assault on Boeing's ability to create work everywhere, and you're going after 1,000 jobs that we need. Well, quite frankly, the people in Washington need 1,000 jobs just as well. They're being discriminated against and this big company is violating the law. The only thing different about this case and all the cases in the past was this is a major donor of the Republican Party, and they're a giant corporation that has giant government contracts.

Now, here's what I want to say to you. South Carolina has nothing to do with this. Nothing. Because there's a settlement in Washington where Boeing is at.

They can bring jobs back from China, from Japan, from the other 50 locations around the world where they have jobs. They can actually bring all of those back to comply. It doesn't have to be South Carolina because we've never mentioned South Carolina in the case, the machinists have. It's about people being discriminated.

So, what's the response? The National Labor Relations Board, they started investigating them, threatening to cut off their budget, doing all kind of things to try to chill or influence what is supposed to be an independent agency. Now, imagine if you were a judge, what would happen if there was a case in front of him and Lindsey Graham says we're cutting off that court's budget if you don't drop this case? We would scream bloody murder, wouldn't we? Trying to influence the decision of a judge, the system doesn't work that way. But that's precisely the same thing that's happening here: they're trying to influence the decision of a judge with a board.

And here's the other thing. So, then they pass this law in the House last week it's so overly broad, here's what would happen. I'll give you two examples.

Women are being discriminated against in a place, they file a complaint with the NLRB. The NLRB comes in and says you bet, they've been discriminating against women because they were women. And the company says sorry, we're moving the work elsewhere. Under the law that they proposed, the NLRB could do nothing about that.

Another example. You're blatantly discriminating against blacks or Hispanics or Asians or anybody else, blatantly discriminating. File a complaint with the NLRB. They come in and say absolutely, you're discriminating against them. The company says too bad, we're moving this work to South Carolina. Don't care. The NLRB can do nothing about it under this new law.

So, it takes a weak law and makes it weaker. I mean, that's almost despicable when you think about passing a law that you haven't even thought about the bad consequences that could happen in different groups of people that need protection.

So, the NLRB now has three people on the board. The Republicans will

not endorse or they won't confirm anybody for the NLRB. Don't care how good you are, has nothing to do with it. They don't want the NLRB to work. They don't want workers to have protections. They don't want anybody on the playing field except corporate America. And so, we'll see what happens. There'll have to be recess appointment made so that you can keep the board running. Elsewise, on December 31 of this year, there will be two people left on the board. The Supreme Court has already said two people on the board, even when they agree, can't conduct business. That will mean that the NLRB will be nonfunctional, precisely what they've tried to do all along.

MR. WEST: Okay, right there in the aisle.

MR. MALLOY: Yes. Mr. Trumka, I'm Pat Malloy. I'm a member of the Bipartisan U.S.-China Commission, a congressional think-tank on trade with China.

Since 2000, we've had about \$2 trillion worth of trade deficits with China. The commission has recommended that we take action to countervail China's underpriced currency. Leader Reid has announced he's taking a bill to the floor, a bipartisan bill, to put pressure on China to change this illegal practice of under pricing its currency. I've seen where the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the U.S.-China Business Council, the Club for Growth, and others have all announced their opposition to that bill. So, I wanted to get your view on why are they so opposed to this legislation.

Two, what is the position of the AFL-CIO on this legislation?

And, three, what do you think the position of the Obama Administration should be on this legislation?

MR. TRUMKA: Well, I'm sort of amazed, Pat, that you're surprised that they're against this bill. (Laughter) Of course, they are. They represent the multinationals.

There's been a group that has been crying from the National Association of Manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. All the small employers who produce here, the small and the midsize employers manufacturers that support it, they support that bill because they know they're getting creamed, they know they're being treated

improperly.

And here's one point that needs to be made: When China cheats on its currency, it's not just China, there are 12 or 13 or 14 other countries in that Pacific Rim that cheat on theirs, as well, because they have to do that to be able to compete with China. So -- yet that whole area, that's skewing currency and getting an unfair advantage over the American producer.

We support the bill. We have supported it, we're out in front of it. We think that China should play and everybody should play by the same rules. We don't manipulate our currency; they shouldn't be able to do it either. And they shouldn't get a 40 to 45 percent advantage over American producers because they manipulate currency. That's wrong, they shouldn't do it, so we're against it. And I think that -- I mean, we're for the bill and I think the Chamber of Commerce and the rest of the people (inaudible) obviously are against it because their big members are the multinationals who benefit from it.

You produce here in the United States, you would think why would you tolerate that, until you think about what I said earlier. Remember? I said between 2000 and 2009, they destroyed 2.9 million jobs in this country; they created 2.4 million jobs over there. They're making a profit over there. They benefit now by the system working the way it did work rather than being a fair system. That's why they're against the bill and why they support China's ability to manipulate its currency. And they'll give you lip service about it, but, ultimately, they support China's ability to manipulate its currency, and that's wrong.

MR. WEST: Okay, there's a woman right here with her hand up in the white blouse.

MS. CARSON: Hello there. My name is Emma Carson. I'm an intern at the State Department.

I just wanted to know your opinion on the occupational training aspect that's written into the Obama Jobs Plan.

MR. TRUMKA: Look, occupational training's obviously a good thing. If you're talking about there were things in the bill that we disagree with, if you're talking about the Georgia Works aspect of it, where they force workers to go to work for an employer for free -- for free -- that's not a good idea, and they call it training. You go to work for this company, they'll be 2,000 of you, you get it free, and we'll train you, and then we may hire 1 or 2 of you. Didn't work out so good in Georgia, and I think they got 14 people that enlisted in the program last month. Not a very good deal.

Look, the biggest supplier of adult training and skills training in the United States is the American labor movement. We skills train more people than anybody else. The building trades do an outstanding job of training apprentices, and now, by the way, we're going back and doing pre-apprenticeship training. People couldn't pass the apprenticeship training to it. We're teaching them math skills, English skills, reading skills so they can take the test and get into it. And then we train them. Then, after they're in there, we give them skills training. We pledge this year, the AFL-CIO has pledged this year to retrain or to train 40,000 new people in green jobs skills and to retrain 100,000 of our members. We made that promise in June. We've already gotten to 42,000 of our skilled people in retraining, and we've trained almost 9,000 new people off the street in skills training.

So, we need the skills training. I think it's a great thing, but it's not the end-all. When people say what's the solution to the problem, and they say education, absolutely education is one sliver of it, but it doesn't create jobs. Because you can be the best educated person in the world, and there's still five of you right now applying for every job opening that's out there. And we need jobs. We need jobs, and so, training for them, supplying those jobs is important.

MR. WEST: All right, here. There's a microphone coming right here. Yeah, right there.

SPEAKER: Hi, my name is Virginia. I'm an OPIU Local 2 member. And I wanted to know what impact you thought your public statements three weeks ago

saying that we didn't want to just write a blank check to the Democrats and we wanted to try to hold all of our politicians accountable, what impact do you think that had on Obama and the writing of the jobs bills? I do think that our leaders need to be holding politicians accountable no matter what party they are.

And in terms of jobs going overseas, it seems like that horse is out of the barn, that really our main strategy should be to bring the standards up for all working people everywhere because if we do that it seems like the economic motivation for companies to just pull up and leave will be taken away.

And then lastly, it just seems that the latest attack on our collective bargaining rights is happening with the U.S. Postal Service. Obama just came out for the five-day delivery week and I'm wondering what you think we can do to help save that public service and to protect those union jobs and workers' rights.

MR. TRUMKA: You know, you gave me two days' worth of stuff. That was sort of unfair. Hopefully I can address a couple of them.

I don't agree with you that the horse is out of the barn, it can't be redone. I think a lot of it can be and will be. You take away the artificial and the incentives they have by cheating, it becomes economically unfeasible for them to ship the products back here and use that as a platform. I think some of those jobs can come back. I agree with your other premise that we ought to do the other things that prevent more stuff or eliminate the incentive to take other jobs off in the future.

I'll start first with the independence I was talking about, political action. Here's what we used to do in the labor movement. Six, seven, eight months, nine months before an election, we would build up our structure. We'd have our people out in the field, we'd be doing phone banks, we'd be doing everything. Election Day we'd tear it down. So, we had no ability or less of an ability to do advocacy or accountability.

The -- what we're going to do now is our program will go year-round, so after Election Day we'll be able to move seamlessly from electoral politics to advocacy, from advocacy to accountability. And, yes, we're going to hold everybody accountable:

Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. Those that are friends to working people, support working people-friendly policies, we'll support them.

The other thing -- the other change that we're doing is, we used to just talk for our members, now we're going out and we're going to start talking to non-union members as well, people that don't have a union yet but are workers and need to be invested in the fight. The more we get facts to them, the more we get them educated and mobilized, I think the better off we are. We build a base of support around issues and not around people, because if you give all your money to a candidate or a party the day after the election, workers are no stronger than they were the day before or 10 weeks ago. That money always used for a candidate or a party gets done.

So, we'll be using more of our money to create structure that stays in place to help workers and stands up for workers. When that politician's right, we'll support him on the issue. When they're wrong, they won't.

You mentioned something about --

MR. WEST: The U.S. Postal Service.

MR. TRUMKA: Yeah, I know, but there was also collective bargaining. You said something about collective bargaining.

SPEAKER: Well, in reference to the U.S. Postal Service.

MR. TRUMKA: Oh, okay. Here's one thing we can do right now to talk about this. You know, they say the Postal Service is broke. They have this \$5 billion bill that they can't pay. Well, let me give you the facts of this. In 2006, the Bush people really did want to privatize the Postal Service, but they couldn't because everybody loves the Postal Service because it does such a great job. You live in a rural community where I am, people go to the post office, they join there, they talk there, they mingle there, and it does a great job. Billions of pieces of mail a day, very efficient. They wanted to get rid of it, so here's what they did. They passed a little law in 2006 that said the Postal Service -- nobody else in the world, no other agency, no other company -- has to prepay for all their health care -- 75 years' worth -- in 10 years, which meant that they have to pay this

enormous sum every year to prefund the health care for pensioners. Nobody else has to do that.

Guess what it was this year? The payment was \$5 billion this year. Guess what their deficit was this year? Five billion dollars. But here's the real kicker: They already have \$42 billion in a fund sitting there prefunded. They're lucrative. Let them apply some of that, you wouldn't have any problems. When it comes to operations, the Postal Service is operating in the black. They put these artificial rules on them.

Now, let me take a company out there and say you have to prefund all your health care for the next 75 years in 10 years. I guarantee you they'll be in the red next year unless they only have two employees somewhere; then maybe you might make it. But it was just -- it was a straw man.

Look, six-day delivery is an important thing. Six-day delivery is important for business, it's important for families, it's important for the country. And I've got to tell you, closing a lot of rural post offices, it's like ripping the heart out of a little community because that's where they go to socialize, that's where they go to see friends. Now, that may not mean anything to people here in Washington or in seats of power, but I can tell you, in small towns that means a whole lot. People care about that and especially when it's working. It's an efficient delivery system.

And by the way, I don't know if you knew this or not, but UPS and FedEx use the federal government to deliver to over 2,000 cities in the U.S. because they can't get there. They use the Postal Service to get there. Now, rip that out, because if they go, they won't be able to help UPS and FedEx on time, overnight delivery. They won't be able to do it. It's a sin to take something that really works and try to destroy it artificially.

What we can do to help them, get those facts out because I saw the heads in this crowd when they heard the facts. They go, wow, that doesn't make sense. Right? How many people here still want to privatize the Postal Service? Raise your hand.

MR. WEST: Okay, right there on the aisle, fifth row back.

MS. KLEIN: Hi, Andra Klein with Family Voices of D.C.

MR. TRUMKA: I'm sorry, I didn't hear your first name.

MS. KLEIN: Andra Klein. I'd like to talk about the use of technology.

For instance, like, I didn't know that the Postal Service was that much with assets in holding. Why are we not using organizations, small nonprofits, small businesses, to push the message forward by way of YouTube? Ninety-eight percent of minorities have cell phones, fully functioning. This is how they use the computer needs, the Internet. Why are we not using those kinds of tools to educate the populace, then put a link in to go right to the website of that Congressional representative, flood the e-mails, bring down the website, and then they will hear us?

MR. TRUMKA: We are. Go on our website and you can go right to that representative's or senator's house or his website or her website, any one of them.

But we are struggling. The bigger point you make is why aren't we using social media more effectively? Well, we're struggling to catch up with that.

Right now as we speak we have a conference in Minneapolis going on with young people. We bring young people in. We started trying to make a concerted effort because the labor movement for the last two or three decades, we made a bad mistake towards young people. We had a model and we tried to get them to come into our model, and our model didn't work for them. Instead of having an employer they do a -- I call it the gig society: they do a gig here and a gig here and a gig here. So our model doesn't work. So, we started bringing them in. There's 8- to 900 of them right now with our secretary treasurer talking about how we can change ourselves to meet their needs, not telling them how, asking them how.

And we're using -- they're teaching us the use of social media a lot more effectively, how to be able to Twitter and Tweet and do Facebook and a multitude of other things. We're also using a thing that's really fascinating, a Tele-Town Hall conferences. I did one in Ohio. We had 77,000 people on it. Average length of stay on the phone was 12 minutes. So, we talked to 77,000 people for an average of 12 minutes

without moving, without getting out of my room.

So, we're working at it, we're struggling at it, and we're trying to get better. And I can only tell you this, we have it on our radar screen and we are focused on doing a better job at using technology to educate, to motivate, and to get people out.

But I think you're right on the money, your point.

MR. WEST: Okay, we have time for one or two more questions. There's a gentleman over here in the red. There's a microphone coming over to you right now.

MR. GARY: Hi, I'm Kevin Gary and -- with CWA Local 2222, and I agree with everything that you said, President Trumka, for the last hour. But one of the issues that's never been brought up is the 30-hour workweek, time and a half after 30, and I think it would really reduce the unemployment rates. But nobody's talking about it and I've gone all over the place and I can't get anybody to raise it.

MR. TRUMKA: I think you make a good point. We call it work sharing.

MR. GARY: It's not -- work share goes down. It takes -- that's one step down, but you need the time and a half change on the 40-hour workweek after 30.

MR. TRUMKA: Oh, I see what you're saying.

MR. GARY: That's the key. Once you do that -- for instance, at Verizon, we could put three workers on Monday through Wednesday, put them on the same truck. Then Thursday through Saturday, put the second driver on. So, you have two workers, one truck utilizing all the capital equipment. Same way with the Post Office, both of those contracts are open right now. Why can't we do that?

MR. TRUMKA: We can. It's the will. It's the desire and the ability. I told you about the two imbalances, the imbalances between employers and workers. Getting it done would be a difficult thing right now. The Republican -- the Tea Party Republicans in the House would -- I can't imagine them ever doing that, but the larger point you make is an important one. We ought to be talking about things like that. We ought to be talking about innovative ways to increase the economy and increase jobs, and work sharing, quite frankly, is another system. They use it in Europe whenever they didn't have the

demand. Instead of laying people off, they reduce the workweek of everybody and everybody still had a job and they were still getting benefits there, which was a step up from what we do, which is like whack people and turn them loose without much of a social safety net. Our safety net is pretty bad.

But the answer is, there's no reason why, other than political will, that that couldn't and shouldn't be done.

MR. GARY: Thank you.

MR. WEST: We have time for one more question. We'll give you the last question. Can we have a microphone -- right over here. It's coming to you.

MR. GUGGENHEIM: Hi. My name is Joe Guggenheim. I'm retired, but I once was a labor union economist. Many economists looking at what President Obama is proposing in the jobs bill feel it really isn't strong enough to make a major dent to get the unemployment rate down to where it should be. And part of what he proposes is just an extension of what's already existing, although very much needed, like unemployment insurance benefits and payroll tax holiday.

What is the AFL's position on how much we should have in the stimulus? Do you have a position on that? Are you satisfied with what the President asked for? Where do you stand on that issue? How much do we need?

MR. TRUMKA: I'll go back to the first stimulus and say it was -- we knew it was underfunded at that point. The second one -- this is an important step. It's not the last step, it's an important step that he took for two reasons. One, he's making jobs the focus of debate right now, which it should have been all along rather than deficit reduction. We know that this isn't going to get everybody back to work or solve all the problems, but it is an important first step.

The second thing it does is he's starting to lead. He's leading on job creation, he's talking about job creation, he's fighting for job creation, and that's a good thing for workers, that's a good thing for the country, and, coincidentally, it's also a good thing for him because people want a strong leader that's willing to fight for them.

It won't solve all the problems. If you look at infrastructure, I told you we have a \$2.2 trillion deficit for old infrastructure, \$2 trillion for new stuff -- it's going to take a lot of money to be able to do it. But think about this: the more jobs that we create, the lower the deficit. Put people back to work instead of taking unemployment benefits, they're paying into unemployment benefits, they're creating, they're paying taxes, they're not taking out, they're putting in. That's the solution, the long-term solution to all this stuff.

So, we think his bill is not the end, but it is a very important first step to have a national debate around the jobs crisis, and that's why we support it. We don't agree with everything in it, but it is an important first step and it will put people back to work if it's implemented.

And my question is, to our friends, the Republicans, you don't support it? What's your alternative? What's your alternative? And here's what they'll say: cut more taxes, eliminate more regulations, and everything will be hunky dory, just like it was after 8 years of George Bush, 700,000 jobs a month being flushed. We can do better than that, this country can do better than that. That's why we support the bill. It won't be the last one, and I told you, if you listen carefully, I said we support it, we will attempt to strengthen it, and we will attempt to get it passed, and then we'll move on to the next portion, the next step. You've got to go with step one first.

MR. WEST: Okay, we will make that the benediction on this event, so President Trumka, thank you very much for sharing your views with us. (Applause)

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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