

Speech by Senator Barack Obama, Presented at a Labor Day event in Detroit, Michigan

September 1, 2008: This Labor Day weekend, we don't just celebrate the end of summer, we also honor the hardworking men and women who have made this country what it is and the American labor movement that has fought tirelessly to improve their wages, benefits and working conditions. America was built by its laborers, but today our workers are struggling just to get by in an economy that no longer works for them.

That's why we can't afford four more years of the failed George Bush economic policies – policies that Senator McCain has proudly embraced and promises to continue. It's time we had a President who will stand up for working men and women by building an economy that rewards not just wealth, but work and the workers who create it. It's time you had a partner in the White House who knows that the struggles facing working families can't be solved by spending billions of dollars on more tax breaks for big corporations and wealthy CEOs, and that hardworking families need immediate relief.

That's why, as President, I'll end tax breaks for companies that ship jobs overseas and give them to companies that create good-paying jobs here at home, and while Senator McCain is proposing \$4 billion in new tax breaks for oil companies that are making record profits I'll put a \$1,000 tax cut into the pockets of 95% of workers and their families.

It's time you had a President who honors organized labor – who's walked on picket lines; who doesn't choke on the word 'union'; who lets our unions do what they do best and organize our workers; and who will finally make the Employee Free Choice Act the law of the land.

That is the choice in this election. We can choose to remain on the path that has abandoned workers and gotten our economy in so much trouble, or we can reclaim the idea that in America, opportunity is open to anyone who's willing to work for it.

I've spent my entire career fighting for working men and women. And so has my running mate, Joe Biden, a man whose heart and values are rooted firmly in the middle class. With him by my side, I am confident that we can take this country in a new direction and restore that fair shot at your dreams that is at the core of what Joe Biden and I stand for, and what America stands for as a nation.

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