

SENATOR JOE BIDEN ON STANDING WITH AMERICA'S WORKERS

"Every day we see more evidence this economy is not working for middle-class Americans. If we honor work, we have to reward it." -- Senator Joe Biden

THE BIDEN PLAN: VALUING WORK IN AMERICA

- **Raising the Minimum Wage:** Senator Biden supported increasing the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour from \$5.15, where it had been stuck for 10 years. No American should work a full-time job and come home too poor to meet basic needs. Raising the minimum wage for those on the lowest rung of our economic ladder in 2007 is a first step toward better pay for all working Americans.
- **Protecting Worker Rights to Bargain Collectively:** Senator Biden is a co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, a bill to ensure workers can form, join, or assist labor unions without interference from employers.
- **Representing Workers In Trade Negotiations:** When done right, expanding international trade – and expanding markets for American products – can be good for the United States. However, with the rise of new economies the global workforce has doubled, and we compete directly with countries like China that can be simultaneously low-wage and high-tech. Unless our trade policies protect basic labor standards, we risk the loss of jobs in this new global economy. That is why Senator Biden voted against trade agreements negotiated by the Bush Administration, such as CAFTA, that rolled back standards for labor protections. It failed to guarantee American workers the security they deserve and Central American workers the promise of improved working conditions.
- **Preserving Retirement Security:** Senator Biden understands that after working hard your whole life, you should not have to worry about losing your retirement income.
 - ✓ He opposes plans to privatize Social Security that would shift risks to workers and cut benefits to all future retirees.
 - ✓ He has authored tough new criminal penalties to prevent the kind of fraud that cost 15,000 Enron employees their retirement savings.
 - ✓ He supports strengthening the government backstop against pension bankruptcies.
 - ✓ He backs efforts to make it easier for workers to save for retirement years.
- **Creating Green-Collar Jobs:** As the country moves to new energy technologies, Senator Biden is a strong supporter of efforts to help attract and train workers for new green-collar jobs that make homes and businesses more energy efficient. Senator Biden is a co-sponsor of a worker training program that would help U.S. workers get good jobs in an industry that could employ 3 million people if the U.S. launches an ambitious program to build a new energy future.
- **Training More Nurses:** As we face the challenge of providing health care for all Americans, we need to prepare new workers. Senator Biden wants to attract more students to the nursing profession by expanding access to loans and scholarship

opportunities. He also recognizes the need to increase the number of nurse faculty to teach the next generation of nurses. In addition, he supports legislation that gives laid off workers the chance to train for employment as nurses and other health care professionals.

THE BIDEN RECORD: THREE DECADES OF HONORING WORK

- **Making Workplaces Safer:** Since his earliest days in Washington, Senator Biden has advocated making the American workplace the safest in the world. Time and again he has voted to extend OSHA regulations, and vigorously opposed efforts to restrict the application of OSHA coverage.
- **Defending Overtime Rules:** Senator Biden fought to block new federal regulations that undermine the basic employee safeguards and threaten to deny overtime rights to broad categories of American workers such as teachers, nurses, and salespeople.
- **Saving Davis-Bacon Wages:** Senator Biden joined the successful protest against the Bush Administration's shameless plan to waive prevailing wage requirements for workers hired to help rebuild the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina.
- **Helping Workers Whose Jobs Have Moved Overseas:** Senator Biden always has been a strong supporter of the Trade Adjustment Assistance programs that help communities where plants have closed and jobs have moved overseas. He wants to increase training funds and health care subsidies to workers in hard-hit communities.
- **Balancing Work and Family:** As a father whose children faced difficult medical challenges, Senator Biden knows first-hand the problems of balancing work and family. He was a strong supporter of the Family and Medical Leave Act that has given 50 million workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to take care of a sick family member. Knowing there are many more workers who cannot afford unpaid leave, he is co-sponsoring the Healthy Families Act, which would require employers with 15 or more workers to provide seven paid sick days to care for their own or their families' medical needs.
- **Caring for America's Children:** Senator Biden has been a long and strong supporter of affordable child care. He pushed to expand the Head Start program, that now serves 900,000 children; and he voted to expand many successful childhood programs such as the Child Care and Development Block Grant, Title I preschool, and the Early Learning Fund. He also has advocated for more resources for the Women, Infants, and Children program that provides food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services to pregnant women, new mothers, and their infants.
- **Caring for America's Seniors:** As a son who has helped care for his parents, Senator Biden also knows first-hand the importance of having a stable, experienced home care workforce to help the growing number of senior citizens. Home care is often the best and most comfortable option for people. He supports expanding access to home health and hospice services and is a co-sponsor of the Community Choices Act, designed to help disabled Americans get Medicaid coverage for community-based attendant services at home.