Labor and Communities
Chicago, September 18, 2018

Just Transition Fund
Midwest Convening
PRESIDENTS HARDING, COOLIDGE, AND HOOVER SUPPORT CORPORATE MERGERS, AUTHORIZE CORPORATE TAX REBATES, CUT TAXES FOR THE WEALTHY, VETO SOCIAL SERVICE AND FARM RELIEF BILLS, FIGHT MINIMUM WAGE AND CHILD LABOR ACTS
“Main Street “ Movement, a semi respectable lodge --- Flint, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Muskegon 1925 --- Patriotism/anti immigrant,/ anti catholic, racist
Collapse of corporate paternalism.
Unemployed waiting for work shoveling snow - 1932
Today’s unions grounded in the 1930s
Widespread community activism and support as shown in this Unemployed Council demonstration, Pontiac, 1931
1935 Meat Strike
1938 RENT STRIKE
SOCIAL UNIONISM: 1940S
LABOR AND THE COMMUNITY

1) Civil Rights
   Desegregate production work
   Desegregate restaurants, bowling allies

2) Collective Bargaining Benefits All
   1945 GM Demand: wages up 30%, prices 0
   Pensions tied to Social Security

3) Community Activism
   Labor-Community Health Centers
   Food Coops
   Labor Radio: WDET, Guy Nunn
• ‘Collective bargaining’ is how working people gain a voice at work and the power to shape their working lives

• Union workers are diverse, just like America
  • Unions represent workers of all levels of education
  • Union workers hail from a variety of sectors, but the biggest share work in education or health services
  • Unions are thriving in diverse workplaces—including ‘new economy’ workplaces

• Unions strengthen democracy by giving workers a voice in policy debates
• Unions reduce inequality and are essential for low- and middle-wage workers’ ability to obtain a fair share of economic growth
• Unions raise wages for both union and nonunion workers
• Unions help raise wages for women and lessen racial wage gaps
As union membership has fallen, the top 10 percent have been getting a larger share of income

Union membership and share of income going to the top 10%, 1917–2014


Economic Policy Institute
Union membership rate and share of income going to the middle 60 percent of families, 1917–2013

Sources: Data on union density follow the composite series found in Historical Statistics of the United States; updated to 2013 from unionstats.com. Data on the middle 60 percent’s share of income are from U.S. Censs Bureau Historical Income Tables (Table F-2).
Private-sector unionization has declined as a direct result of anti-union policies

Union coverage rates by sector, 1973–2016

**Note:** Coverage rates are based on data for all workers age 16 and up.

**Source:** EPI analysis of data from the Union Membership and Coverage Database (unionstats.com), compiled by Barry Hirsch and David Macpherson (posted February 11, 2017)

Economic Policy Institute
• Unions improve the health and safety practices of workplaces
• Unions support strong families with better benefits and due process
• Unions are good for workers’ retirement security
• Unions create a path to sharing knowledge and solving problems
• Workers still want unions but are being thwarted by aggressive campaigns and lobbying that have eroded private-sector union membership
• Employers often fight unionizing efforts with aggression and intimidation, using legal and illegal tactics
• Corporate lobbyists push laws—misleadingly called ‘right-to-work’ laws—that seek to defund private-sector unions
• Attacks on public-sector collective bargaining are playing out in the courts
• Conclusion: Unions are essential to a fair economy and a vibrant democracy