

Labor and Economic Justice

[Encompasses previous planks of Economic Justice, Jobs and Tax Fairness, Labor, and Corporate Power...]

Income inequality is the driving issue of our time. We are committed to a sustainable economy with strong communities based on living-wage jobs, tax fairness, and shared prosperity. A strong economy and nation depend on jobs that provide safe working conditions, fair and living wages, and benefits for all workers, with hourly wages indexed to the cost of living. Every worker must have the right to organize and bargain collectively to determine their pay, benefits, and working conditions. Corporations are artificial entities, and not entitled to Constitutional protections as persons. We oppose the undue influence of corporations on our society, government, and political process.

We believe:

- Workers are dedicated, industrious and competitive;
- Workers deserve respect and a living wage; we define a living wage as the wage necessary for a person working forty hours a week, with no additional income, to afford decent housing, food, utilities, transport, and health care - that creates a work-life balance;
- Employers must provide a safe and harassment - hostility free work environment that meets state and federal standards;
- Workers' rights to organize, to join a union, to enjoy due process, and to bargain collectively without any interference, intimidation or threats from employers or the government shall not be abridged or denied;
- Workers have the right to strike;
- Workers must have retirement and health benefits that are portable between employers;
- Workers need to have better access to education and training in order to be competitive in a world market of jobs;
- Workers' wages should be commensurate with increases in productivity;
- Workers, public as well as private, must participate in the government social security program;
- Child labor standards that limit the hours youths are allowed to be employed during the school year.

We Call For:

National Level	State Level

- Incremental increases in the state and federal minimum wage, with a living wage indexed to inflation as the outcome;

- Updating the federal poverty level to reflect reality and thereafter adjusting it according to cost of living;
- Funding and rebuilding our infrastructure as a proven method of job creation, including adoption of the federal Rebuild America Act;
- A progressive tax system at both the federal and state level, including taxing unearned income at the same rate as earned income;
- A state income tax offset by cuts in regressive taxes (e.g., sales tax), a state capital gains tax, eliminating the Business and Occupation tax in favor of a flat 1% corporate income tax, and a 0.25% financial transaction tax on Wall Street trading;
- Economic justice on women's issues such as social security reform; pension reform; living wages; pay equity; job discrimination; child care; paid sick, safe, and family leave; and reproductive rights;
- Economic justice on parental issues such as pension reform; living wages; job discrimination; child care; and paid sick, safe, and family leave;
- Increasing the rate of food assistance;
- A budget that represents tax exemptions as expenditures to be part of the biennial appropriations process;
- Targeted economic development incentives to businesses that provide verifiable, immediate, and lasting benefits to our communities;
- Repealing tax breaks and incentives for companies that do not provide verifiable net benefits to the state and requiring them to make restitution; subjecting tax exemptions to renewal every 4 years;
- Greater transparency on the part of federal financial institutions;
- Restoration of the Glass Steagall Act;
- Settling student debt with a program that bases repayment on a percentage of earnings and forgives the balance after 20 years;
- Reducing or eliminating graduate student debt in exchange for 10 years of critically needed in-state public service in certain professions;
- Reversing the 2006 federal bankruptcy law to include discharge of mortgages and student debt in bankruptcy court;
- Opportunities for young people by encouraging the utilization of state approved apprenticeship programs and fully funding AmeriCorps and Job Corps programs;
- Creating a new civilian conservation corps to address natural resources needs;
- Until a living wage is achieved, increasing eligibility for the Earned Income Tax Credit to help the working poor;
- Removing the cap on income subject to Social Security tax;
- Enhancing Social Security so that no recipient lives in poverty;
- Taxing carried interest from private equity and hedge funds as ordinary income;
- A major increase in funding for assistance and construction of affordable and low-income housing in Washington State;
- Improving and implementing property tax breaks on primary residences of low-income homeowners, small and micro businesses;
- A fair system of paying for growth, including urban growth, with impact fees;
- Local, state and federal governments to develop Buy Local, Build Local priority policies that support diverse and resilient local economies;
- Support for small and micro businesses, including tax credits, low-interest loans, tax abatement development zones for start-ups and non-profit micro-lending;
- Establishment of a Washington State Investment Trust (i.e. a state bank);
- Using post offices to provide bank services for low-income people;

- Re-establishing and maintaining usury laws capping all interest rates at the level allowed to credit unions;
- Only those multilateral trade agreements that are conditioned on environmental, health and safety standards, human rights and workers' rights, and which support transparent democratic processes.
- Prevailing wage laws for work under government contracts and/or for government purposes;
- "Best Value Contractor" policies and "Fair Contracting" with "Responsible and Responsive" bidder language in all public work jobs that include contractor responsibilities for prevailing wages, health insurance, retirement and training and to include a performance audit;
- Area standards for wages and benefits;
- State approved apprentice utilization, and a percentage local hiring clause where qualified workers are available on government agencies funded, financed, or involved in projects;
- Unemployment insurance that is supported and extended when economic conditions warrant;
- Workers compensation managed and monitored by the state;
- Unemployment and retraining benefits for workers laid off or locked out by their employers, including those whose jobs are outsourced, downgraded, or eliminated;
- Protection of overtime pay;
- The automatic recognition of a union based on signatures of a majority of those represented and "Card Check" as a legitimate method for unionizing;
- A workers' bill of rights that includes rights of assembly, association and free speech, due process, freedom from discrimination; and democracy within unions;
- Equal participation between labor and employers in the management of workers' pensions;
- Competitive and commensurate wages for all workers, whether they are private sector, non-profit, or state and local government employees;
- Veterans, women, people of color, people with disabilities and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities earning equal compensation for equivalent work;
- Establishment and enforcement of healthy workplace laws, including anti-bullying and anti-harassment laws;
- Safe and adequate housing, medical care and sanitary facilities for all workers, including temporary, migrant, seasonal and contract workers;
- Paid sick, safe, and family leave for both private and public employees in shops of more than four full time equivalent employees;
- Creation of an accrual system for paid leave for all workers;
- Withholding federal contracts from United States corporations that choose to locate "offshore" for tax shelter purposes;
- Full funding for programs such as childcare, adult daycare, and flextime to care for family members;
- Increase the state and federal minimum wage, to be a living wage by 2020, indexed to inflation thereafter;
- Support unions by respecting picket lines;
- Workers negotiating agency fees or "Fair Share" clauses into labor agreements;
- Government and private industry to recover and make available to the workers medical and industrial hygiene records related to all workers so that they are paid just compensation for any injuries or illnesses incurred during their employment or as a result of their employment;
- Prosecution of employers who force workers to work off the clock;
- Full enforcement of current health and safety labor laws and prosecution of those employers that violate those laws;
- The publication of the official unemployment statistics that include persons who are underemployed or have given up looking for work, or whose benefits have been exhausted;

- Strengthening, fully funding and staffing the National Labor Relations Board and the imposition of meaningful penalties on employers engaged in unfair practices;
- Preference for Washington State residents on public works projects;
- Market-based compensation for public employees;
- Buying American – the use of U.S. products in manufacturing and in construction;
- Rescinding the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 so that the postal service may return to fiscal soundness;
- Expanded and more effective “whistle blower” protection for all workers at all levels on all public and private jobs with access to courts and protection from retaliation;
- Strengthening solidarity of domestic and foreign workers and their unions both domestically and internationally in a globalized economy;
- Repeal of Taft-Hartley and other existing anti-union legislation, to strengthen workers’ rights.
- Amending the Constitution to firmly establish that corporations are not people and that money is not speech;
- Requiring organizations dedicated primarily to drafting and promoting corporate-backed legislation to register as lobbying organizations and denying them tax-exempt status;
- Repealing tax breaks and incentives for companies that do not provide verifiable net benefits to the state;
- Reinstating the windfall profits tax;
- Strengthening and enforcing laws against corporate crime, with penalties to include prison time for executives and revoking corporate charters;
- Strengthening and enforcing whistleblower laws to provide active protection and restitution for any whistleblowers;
- Fully enforcing antitrust laws. Any corporate entity with holdings so extensive that its failure would cause major disruptions of the national economy must be broken into smaller entities to ensure healthy, competitive markets and protect consumers;
- Transparency in corporate accounting;
- Separating investment banking from commercial and retail banking and subjecting both to tighter regulation, transparency, and accountability;
- Tightly regulating or abolishing the derivatives market;
- Strictly limiting shell companies;
- Increasing oversight of companies vital to our economy and environment, such as those in banking and fossil fuel extraction;
- Government at all levels to hold natural resources in trust for citizens. Lease law rates for mining, harvesting, grazing or otherwise using harvesting of public resources for private profit must be updated annually and set at fair market value. Corporations must leave the lands, waters, and air in an environmentally sound, sustainable state;
- Ending all subsidies for fossil fuel companies;
- Disallowing corporations, foreign or domestic, via any trade agreement or treaty, to demand compensation of “lost profits” caused by laws and regulations meant to protect peoples’ well-being or to ensure safe, sustainable use of natural resources;
- Requiring corporations that adversely impact the sustainability of the natural environment to engage in mitigation while the resource is in use and do remediation on-site as near to the site as a suitable property can be found, so that the value of the area is not lost to the citizens;
- Requiring multinational companies to pay their fair share of U.S. taxes and prohibiting use of foreign tax havens, and the forfeiture of corporate status as U.S.-based corporations or their ability to do business in the U.S., or federal business overseas should these tenets be violated;

- Increasing exports of manufactured goods and decreasing exports of raw resource material through use of tariffs and taxes;
- Repealing subsidies or tax reductions to U.S. based firms that outsource jobs overseas;
- International trade based on fair trade that includes living wages, environmental protection and human rights;
- Sanctioning multinational corporations, their affiliates, subsidiaries, and/or franchises from operating in violation of international law;
- Prohibiting the import or export or sale of products made by exploiting the environment, local communities, and people and all products of forced labor and/or child labor;
- Prohibiting United States companies from engaging in or enabling practices abroad that would be prohibited at home.

We Oppose:

- Excessive corporate profits and executive compensation;
- Privatization of Social Security, reduction of benefits, or increasing the age of eligibility for benefits;
- Privatization, downsizing, outsourcing, and offshoring of public services;
- Excessive fees and excessive interest charged to consumers by short-term lending corporations;
- The use of credit scores for hiring and insurance rating;
- Taxing unemployment, worker compensation and Social Security benefits;
- Any constitutional amendment that requires an un-democratic two-thirds vote in the Legislature to raise revenues;
- Forced arbitration clauses in all consumer contracts, warranties, guarantees, etc.
- “Right-to-work” and other anti-union legislation;
- Any attacks on the Davis-Bacon Acts, prevailing wage laws;
- Exploitation of seasonal, temporary, migrant and contract workers;
- Corporations using mergers and bankruptcy courts to abscond with workers’ pensions;
- Under-funding of pension liabilities by either the private or public sector;
- Foreign trade agreements, such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), that put the interests of corporations above the rights of workers and environmental protections that overrule the authority of federal, tribal, state, and local governments;
- All forms of wage and tip theft;
- Using tips as part of a minimum wage calculation;
- Use of permanent replacement workers during strikes;
- Supplanting or displacing public employees with low-wage, low-benefit contract employees or prison labor;
- The unilateral redefining of workers as independent contractors to reduce labor costs, rendering workers ineligible for benefits and other protection;
- The privatization of workers compensation;
- Firing without just cause;
- Public employee pension reductions by the legislature;
- Balancing the public budget with pension funds;
- Gratuitous attacks by elected officials upon labor organizations, public and private employees;
- Release of personal information of publicly funded employees;
- Any attempt to privatize the Social Security retirement system;
- Any attempt to cut Social Security benefits or raise retirement age;
- Hiring policies that discriminate against unemployed applicants, felons, and military veterans with a discharge other than honorable.

- Corporations exerting undue influence on our government through access to regulatory commissions and drafting congressional and state legislation;
- Foreign ownership and management of our ports, highways, bridges, pipelines, and other infrastructure assets which are crucial to our national safety and security;
- Patent and copyright laws that grant corporations monopolies over unnecessarily long terms;
- Corporate mergers that enable price control or other monopolistic limitation of the free market economy;
- Attempts to weaken and underfund the powers of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau;
- Corporations terminating defined benefit retirement plans or using mergers and bankruptcy courts to appropriate workers' pensions and substituting 401K plans for defined benefit pensions.