Rebuilding the American Labor Movement: CAN IT BE DONE?

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The American Labor Movement

union density, 1930-2014

0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40%

public
total
private
Reasons for Decline

Economic Factors (globalization, deregulation, etc.)

Political Factors (right wing attacks, all employers anti-union in U.S.)

Self-inflicted wounds (failure to organize, fighting between unions, lack of vision)
How To Rebuild?  
The Big Debate  

• Pretend it’s not happening  

• Give up collective bargaining; focus on wages, regulations & voluntary worker associations  

• Do regional, nationwide industry-wide COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGNS
STRATEGY

Comprehensive Campaigns to build power over industry through local, state, federal government (contracts, procurement, policy, regulations, laws)
How do we think about Comprehensive Campaigns?

- Industry-wide, multi-employer projects (regional & national) to get to density
- Building local & state political power
- Strategic Research
- Public Policy Leverage
- Building Powerful Coalitions
- Neighborhood & Worker Organizing
- Strategic Communications
STRATEGY COMPONENTS

Focus on key sectors/industries:
• Tourism
• Waste
• Ports & trucking
• Retail
• Construction
• Manufacturing of buses & railcars

Focus on blue regions (even w/in red states)

Focus on national industries
(that touch red & blue)
Can we win in face of right wing expansion?
New Initiatives that ARE Winning (and in the headlines)

Why unions lead the $15 minimum wage fight

Washington Examiner: Minimum wage fight moves from Capitol Hill to state and local ballots

JMA helps harness $2 Billion Transit Purchase for Good Jobs!

Foes and fans of L.A. economic-justice group agree it gets things done
New Initiatives that are Winning!

LA Times: Five-day trucker strike at Los Angeles and Long Beach ports ends

LA Times: Mayor Garcetti signs law establishing franchise zones for trash collection

LA Times: Wal-Mart protesters set to march from downtown L.A. to Chinatown

Good jobs no longer an afterthought in awarding lavish transit contracts
Inspiring a New Social Movement
Inspiring a New Social Movement
Lilla Wallace, Los Angeles, CA
Questions:

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