

Labor Day 2001 – Hardly a Holiday

Good news for working families is in short supply this holiday weekend. The U.S. and Canadian economies are stuck in a recession. Companies are firing thousands of employees in a desperate bid to sustain the runaway profits of the past decade.

Corporations are forcing workers to pay for this recession with the loss of their houses, health care and automobiles. Those same employees pushed profits and productivity to historic highs. Now they are being told to drop their tools, turn off their computers and hit the street - and for what? So that shareholders can be spared a pause in quarterly dividends?

For today's unemployed, the news quickly goes from bad to worse. Gone are the days when unemployment insurance would cover bills and preserve buying power. Gone too, is the prospect of a quick recall to a previous job. The options that once existed for laid off workers are evaporating faster than the U.S. budget surplus.

This Labor Day we face the prospect of millions of workers being used as human shields to give greedy corporations cover from an unnecessary economic downturn. It is a testament to our strength that we will survive, but we must examine the wisdom of forcing mass layoffs to give Wall Street an unfair advantage at the expense of Main Street.

As we celebrate our day, Labor Day, remember that no matter how tough the times get, we have the resources of our union and each other to carry us through.

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Have you heard?

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