



EN ESPAÑOL

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We meet at a difficult time for organized labor. A while back, I went to a Maytag plant in Galesburg, Illinois that was moving to Mexico. And I met workers who were having to compete with their own children for jobs that pay seven bucks an hour. A few months ago, I traveled to Newton, where Maytag was shutting its doors after 114 years. One worker who'd been there more than a decade said, "I just thought I would retire from here and never have another job. I'm scared."

I'm scared.

It makes us outraged to hear these stories. And we've been hearing them for a long time. It was stories like these that led me more than two decades ago to walk away from a career on Wall Street and become a community organizer in Chicago, so I could help folks who'd lost jobs and lost hope when the nearby steel plants closed down. I didn't know a soul in Chicago, but I knew I didn't like the idea of working people being laid off and not having anybody fighting for them. I knew I wanted to do my part to make sure they had a decent future.

So when I go to places like Galesburg or Newton, it reminds me why I entered public service. And it reminds me why I'm a Democrat. Because if the Democratic Party means anything, then it has to mean we value labor. If the Democratic Party stands for anything, then it has to stand up for your rights, and your future. If the Democratic Party has a vision for America - then it has to be an America that's working for working Americans.

But we all know that for a long time now, we've had a President who doesn't see it that way. We have lived through six years of the most anti-labor administration in generations. They don't believe in unions. They don't believe in organizing. They've packed the labor relations board with their corporate buddies. Well, we've got news for them - it's not the Department of Management, it's the Department of Labor, and we're going to take it back.

But despite six years of them doing everything they could to tear labor down - as I look out on this crowd and as I travel across this country, the one thing I know for certain is that the UAW is still fighting. The UAW is still mobilizing. The UAW is still organizing.

I'm tired of playing defense. I know the UAW is tired of playing defense. We're ready to play some offense. We're ready to play offense for a secure retirement. We're ready to play offense to enforce labor laws.

We're ready to play offense for universal health care. I'm tired of seeing unions go to the bargaining table and fight for the benefits they negotiated a long time ago, instead of fighting for better wages to support their families. I reformed health care in Illinois. And I did it by reaching out to Democrats and Republicans. We took on the insurance industry, and we won. And that's what I'll do as President. I've got a plan that cuts costs for the typical family by up to \$2,500 a year - more than any other plan that's been offered in this race. And I make this solemn pledge to you - I'll sign my universal health care plan into law by the end of my first term.

We're ready to play offense for American workers. When I'm President, we're not going to wait twenty years or ten years to raise the minimum wage - we'll raise it to keep pace with inflation every year so that American workers aren't falling behind. And we'll take tax breaks away from companies that ship our jobs overseas and put them in the pockets of working Americans who deserve it.

We're not going to stop globalization in its tracks, but we shouldn't be standing idly by while American jobs are shipped overseas. It's time to put Main Street ahead of Wall Street when it comes to trade. The only trade agreements I believe in are ones that put workers first - because trade deals aren't good for the American people if they aren't good for working people. That's why I opposed CAFTA. That's

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why I oppose the South Korea Free Trade Agreement. That's why I voted to block Mexican trucks from entering this country. And that's why we need to amend NAFTA.

We're ready to take the offense for organized labor. It's time we had a President who didn't choke saying the word "union." We need to strengthen our unions by letting them do what they do best - organize our workers. If a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union. It's that simple. We need to stand up to the business lobby that's been getting their friends in Congress and in the White House to block card check. That's why I was one of the leaders fighting to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. That's why I'm fighting for it in the Senate. And that's why we'll make it the law of the land when I'm President.

There are few more important unions in this country than the UAW. You created the auto industry. You secured good-paying jobs for generations of workers. And you built the American middle class - the backbone of our economy. So I know someone once said what's good for GM is good for America. But it's time we also recognized that what's good for the UAW is good for America.

We need to help you compete with workers around the world by helping the auto industry compete with car companies all over the world. Yes, that means raising our fuel standards so we can make the fuel-efficient cars that are the future of your industry. But it also means giving you the help you need to retool your plants so we can build these cars right here in America. And if we can do that, we'll create thousands and thousands of jobs in the process.

But if we're serious about helping you compete abroad, we need to stand up for you here at home. That's why I called Mike Sheridan with Local 95 in Wisconsin the day they decided to strike GM, and gave him my support. And I made the same call to Dan Kirk with Local 72 when Chrysler workers went on strike. And Larry Sharpe and his members in Local 6 from my home state of Illinois can't be here today because they're striking International Truck and Engine, but Larry knows he has my support. Because when you hit the picket lines - whether it's with GM or Chrysler or anybody else - you aren't just fighting for your own rights, you're fighting for the rights of every American worker.

But it's going to be hard to do all this - it's going to be hard to make the UAW's agenda America's agenda - until we end this war in Iraq. This is a war I opposed in 2002. It's a war I opposed in 2003. And in 2004, and 2005, and 2006. This is a war that should have never been authorized and never been waged. And we shouldn't compound the mistake of going in by waiting any longer to pull our troops out. That's why I've called for us to start withdrawing troops not next month, not next year - now.

This is a defining moment in our history. Our nation is at war. The dream that so many generations fought for feels as if it's slowly slipping away. We are working harder for less. We've never paid more for health care or for college. It's harder to save and it's harder to retire. And most of all we've lost faith that our leaders can or will do anything about it.

And it is because of this that America is listening, intently, to what my fellow candidates and I are saying - not just Democrats, but Republicans and Independents who've lost trust in their government, but want to believe again. So in this election, we have a chance to bring the country together in a new majority - to finally tackle problems that George Bush made far worse, but that had festered long before George Bush ever took office - problems that we've talked about year after year after year after year.

And that is why the same old Washington textbook campaigns just won't do in this election. That's why not answering questions because we're afraid our answers won't be popular just won't do. That's why telling the American people what we think they want to hear instead of telling the American people what they need to hear just won't do. Triangulating and poll-driven positions because we're worried about what Mitt or Rudy might say about us just won't do. If we're really serious about winning this election, we can't live in fear of losing it.

The Democratic Party has always made the biggest difference in the lives of the American people when we've led not by polls, but by principle; not by calculation, but by conviction; when we summoned the entire nation to a common purpose - a higher purpose. And I run for the Presidency of the United States of America because that's the party America needs us to be right now.

A party that offers not just a difference in policies, but a difference in leadership.

A party that doesn't just focus on how to win but why we should.

A party that doesn't just offer change as a slogan, but real, meaningful change - change that America can believe in.

That's why I'm in this race. That's why I am running for President of the United States of America.

Now, I know we've got a lot of good candidates in this race, and I know they're saying the right things when they come and talk to you. But politicians often say they're pro-labor at election time no matter what they've said or done before. And that leaves you wondering what they will say or do after the election. So when a candidate rails against NAFTA today, it's fair to ask her where she's been before. When a candidate says he opposes right-to-work laws or trade rules that hurt workers today, ask him where he's been before. Because what you need, what America needs, is a President who will fight for you when it's hard, and not just when it's politically convenient.

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And that's exactly what I intend to do. Because politics didn't lead me to working folks - working folks led me into politics. I was standing with American workers on the streets of Chicago twenty years ago, and the reason I'm here today is because I don't want to wake up one day many years from now and see that we're still standing by while American jobs get shipped overseas.

So I'm not just here to give a speech. I don't like just talking about the problems we face in this country. I want to solve them. So I'm here to ask for your support, Region 4. I'm here to ask you to believe not just in me, but in your own sense of possibility, your own imagination about what America might be.

Imagine a President whose life's story was like so many of your own, who knows what it's like to go to college on scholarships, who knows what it's like to see his mother get sick and worry that maybe she can't pay the medical bills.

Imagine a President who knows what it's like to put on a comfortable pair of shoes and walk with you on that picket line. Who gives Denny Williams a call before any major piece of labor legislation crosses his desk, so even if we don't see eye to eye on everything, your voice will be heard.

Imagine an America where we don't have to keep playing defense because we can finally play some offense.

That future is within our grasp. We can build that America together if you join me.

But each of us has to do our part. So I just want to close with a story about the difference that one voice can make.

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