

A Working People's Agenda

Prepared by North Carolina State AFL-CIO for Lawmakers
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2011-12 Legislative Session
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Times are especially difficult for North Carolina's working families. The decisions made by the N.C. General Assembly in the 2011-12 legislative session will be crucial in determining the future of those families. As in the past, the N.C. State AFL-CIO will be a leading, and sometimes the only, voice for workers and their families on work-place related issues at the legislature.

This session will provide new and unprecedented challenges. As a result, it is more important than ever that legislators hear from union members about the issues important to working families.

We have adopted an agenda that we believe addresses the most fundamental needs of North Carolina workers and their families. Our agenda promotes good jobs, safe workplaces, and strong protection of our rights as workers and consumers. It is an agenda that will put our economy on the right track by enabling working families to get back on their feet.

Good Jobs

The people of North Carolina deserve reliable, family-sustaining jobs in healthy communities.

The manufacturing jobs that once formed the backbone of the state's economy have in large part been lost, leaving far too many unemployed or working at replacement jobs that are lower-paying and less stable. North Carolina needs to recruit and train our citizens for family-sustaining jobs – those that provide good wages and benefits.

- When recruiting companies with taxpayer money, require that they provide good jobs that will raise, not lower, the standard of living for working families.
- Insure that our taxpayer money is not used to assist companies that ship work off shore.
- Encourage the state to buy products that are made in this state and in this country.

Worker Protection

In times of high unemployment, workers have fewer options and thus often are more likely to tolerate abuses in the workplace. Therefore, we urge state policymakers to strengthen worker protections.

- Maintain and improve our stable workers compensation system and unemployment insurance program, both of which are critical in this economy and pay reasonable benefits at relatively low costs for employers.
- Insure workplace health and safety for all, including migrant workers.
- Provide employees time off to take care of personal or family illnesses.
- Curb workplace fraud resulting from the misclassification of employees—a practice that robs the state of millions of dollars in lost payroll and related tax revenue.
- Allow government entities that wish to do so to engage in collective bargaining agreements with their employees.
- Make sure all public employees have access to a fair appeals process.

A Strong Safety Net

Many families are struggling more than ever to make ends meet. Too many citizens are worried about their lack of health insurance and limited access to medical care. If there are severe budget cuts, many seniors, people with disabilities, and children will lose the assistance they depend upon for survival. By providing necessary support to the vulnerable and those most impacted by the present economic crisis, we provide a lifeline to families and also help stimulate local economies. **A balanced approach to the budget that combines protection for the vulnerable with tax fairness is both a moral imperative and fiscally responsible.**

- Protect vital public services for the elderly, children and those with special needs.
- Adequately fund our education system so the future generation will have the skills and training needed to obtain good jobs.
- Generate revenue by closing the loophole that allows large,

multistate corporations to avoid paying their fair share of NC taxes.

Consumer Protection

We have seen how easy credit and unscrupulous lending practices can damage our economy and wreck families' lives.

Now more than ever, we must guard against predatory lending, unnecessary garnishment of wages, and other abusive practices that weaken working families' financial security and economic well-being.

Federal Issues

It will take more than state legislative policies to get our economy back on track. We also need federal officials to make major investments in job creation. We will lobby our congressional representatives to stop unfair trade deals and tax policies that have helped ship good jobs overseas. We will also fight for labor law reform, collective bargaining rights for first responders, and protection of critical federal assistance programs like Social Security and Medicare. **To create an economy that finally works for everyone, we need a working people's agenda passed at all levels of government.**

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