

1-2011

Montana AFL-CIO Convention

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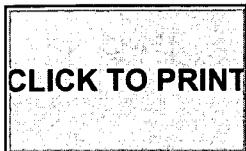
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Montana AFL-CIO Convention Speech

Hello everyone. I'm sorry I can't be with you in person.

I want to say a special hello to Jim McGarvery and Jerry Driscoll. Two old friends. To great advocates on behalf of working men and women and their families. Thanks so much for all you do.

And I especially want to thank you – all of you – for your friendship and support over the years. If it weren't for all of you and your hard work, I wouldn't be here today. Thank you for all you've done and all you continue to do.

Now, more than ever it's critical that we work together to support people who truly recognize the importance of organized labor, worker rights and working men and women.

The current Administration doesn't have a very good track record when it comes to organized labor. They don't support workers' rights. And there are numerous examples that we can look at.

Under the direction of Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, the Administration proposed to modify overtime rules to exclude millions of workers from collecting much-needed and much-deserved overtime. In the Senate I was proud to vote with my colleagues to protect cuts to overtime.

Police officers, firefighters and nurses were among the 8 million workers whose overtime was on the chopping block. But we fought back in Congress.

As top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee and author of the Jumpstart Our Business Strength Act, I would not allow the bill to move forward until we had a vote on overtime. I succeeded in getting a vote that passed the Senate to prevent cuts to overtime. As the differences between the House and Senate JOBS bills get ironed out, I'll be fighting to ensure that those who get overtime continue to receive it.

Another example of the anti-union record is how the Council for Economic Advisors Chairman Gregory Mankiw [MAN-QUE] said that "outsourcing American jobs overseas is good for the U.S. economy in the long run." This could not be further from the truth.

We need to do all we can to keep good-paying jobs in the U.S. and not send them overseas.

In my JOBS bill, I've worked to include provisions that would make it more difficult for businesses to send jobs overseas – to limit the favorable tax status by sending jobs overseas. We need to keep jobs in the U.S. not send them elsewhere.

You can bet that as the differences between the House and Senate highway bills are ironed out, I'll be at the table fighting to maintain the strong Davis-Bacon provisions in the bill.

We need to do whatever we can to support people who will be fair to unions and recognize their significance. Folks who will work for more jobs and higher wages. Folks who will fight for the right to organize. Folks who will push to raise the minimum wage and protect Davis-Bacon. And Folks who will continue to look out for working men and women and their families.

I wish you all a good and productive convention. Get some good work done. And please let me and my staff know if there's anything more we can do for you.

All the best.