

# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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To: Presidents of National and International Unions  
State Federation Officers  
Principal Officers of Central Labor Councils and Area Labor Federations

From: John J. Sweeney 

Date: June 9, 2008

Re: 2008 United Way Endorsement

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As the AFL-CIO works to lead a broad movement to turn America around, working families, the unemployed and the growing numbers of children living in poverty are struggling in an economy that only works for the wealthiest few. Mortgage foreclosures, skyrocketing fuel prices and soaring costs for basic food staples and health care have made the American dream a nightmare for many. This situation is exacerbated by unfair trade deals that encourage export of good jobs and their replacement with minimum wage dead-end jobs for U.S. workers.

While America's union movement mobilizes around a change agenda in 2008, we must also work to help those left behind in our worsening economy. As union members and community leaders, we have a long tradition of working with our communities to ease the burden on the needy, high-risk children and the disabled.

For over 60 years the AFL-CIO Community Services network has worked in national and community-based partnerships with United Way, a relationship that has meant help is there when working families are in need. The daily work of 240 local AFL-CIO Community Services liaisons and 20 labor Community Services agencies is made possible each year by United Way funding.

In response to the growing economic crisis in America, United Way is pioneering new initiatives to ensure that funds contributed through United Way will have a real, positive impact on the lives of those in need and on their communities. United Way works to encourage adequate funding for vital public programs for the working poor, such as State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), the Healthy Start program, Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). These efforts also deserve union support.

Please join me in supporting the 2008 United Way campaign where you live and work. Together, we can help those in real need now while we work to turn America around.

JJS:tw/opeciu#2