

# Howie Hawkins for US Senate

## A LABOR AGENDA

[www.hawkinsforsenate.org](http://www.hawkinsforsenate.org)

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## LABOR LAW REFORM

**Increase NLRB funding and staffing** so complaints against employers are handled in a timely fashion and employers receive strong and speedy penalties for breaking labor laws.

**Enact the proposed federal Employee Free Choice Act**, providing for:

- Majority card-check recognition of unions.
- Triple back pay for workers fired for union organizing.
- Mandatory contract arbitration at union request after 90 days bargaining for first contract for newly recognized bargaining unit.

**Repeal Repressive Labor Laws:** Repeal the Taft-Hartley Act, the Hatch Act, and state "Right-To-Work" Laws which have crippled labor's ability to organize by outlawing or severely restricting labor's basic organizing tools: strikes, boycotts, pickets, and political action.

The right to organize unions, bargain freely and strike when necessary is being destroyed by employers and their representatives in government. Today, nearly 1 out of 10 workers involved in union organizing drives is illegally fired by employers. That is why union membership is declining. And as union membership falls so do the wages of all working people, union and non-union alike. (The buying power of the average worker's wage has declined by 15 percent over the last 25 years.)

**A Workers' Bill of Rights:** Enact a set of legally enforceable civil rights, independent of collective bargaining, which (1) extend the Bill of Rights protections of free speech, association, and assembly into all workplaces, (2) establishes workers' rights to living wages, portable pensions, information about chemicals used, report labor and environmental violations, refuse unsafe work, and participate in enterprise governance, and (3) establishes workers' rights to freedom from discharge at will, employer search and seizure in the workplace, sexual harassment, and unequal pay for work of comparable worth.

**Expand Workers' Rights to Organize and Enjoy Free Time:**

- Ban striker replacements.
- Triple back pay for illegally locked-out workers.
- Unemployment compensation for striking or locked out workers.
- Binding contract arbitration at union request.
- Full rights for farm workers, public employees, immigrants, and "workfare" workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Ban prison slave labor: End the use of US prisoners to produce goods and services for sale to the public. Double-time pay for all overtime.
- Prohibit mandatory overtime.
- 6 weeks paid vacation annually in addition to federal holidays.
- 1 year paid educational leave for every 7 years worked.
- 1 year parental leave for each child born with no loss of seniority.
- Right to work shorter hours: No discrimination in pay and promotion against workers who choose to work short hours; no two-tier wage systems between part-timers and full-timers.

# ECONOMIC JUSTICE

- **Increase in the minimum wage to \$10 an hour**
- **Cap CEO salaries**
- **Guarantee living wage jobs to all willing and able to work**
- **Government support for cooperatives and worker ownership**
- **End corporate welfare**
- **Democratic public ownership of oil and pharmaceutical industries**
- **National Health Insurance – Medicare for All**

It is time to reverse the Democratic and Republican Party tradition of taxing the poor and middle class to pay for tax cuts and giveaways for the wealthy and large corporations. The US leads the world's industrial democracies in income inequality, and the gap is greatest here in NY. We need to end corporate welfare; we need to make the wealthy pay their fair share of taxes; and we need to invest in sustainable, community-based, environmentally-friendly jobs that will put New Yorkers back to work in our inner city neighborhoods and upstate communities.

In recent decades, Corporate America has systematically destroyed millions of decent paying jobs for working people. Politicians from both major parties have given hundreds of billions of dollars in corporate welfare to their corporate campaign contributors while CEO's have awarded themselves with obscene compensation packages as they slash jobs for Americans workers through mergers, runaway investments, subcontracting and outsourcing to third world countries. We just witnessed the first so-called economic recovery that did not result in an increase of jobs - and many of the jobs that do exist pay poverty level wages or are part-time, without benefits such as health care.

We can create millions of living-wage jobs through public investment in infrastructure restoration, public works and services, and conversion from nuclear and fossil fuels to solar-based renewable energy. It's time to stop pretending that another tax cut for the corporate rich is a jobs program. This decades-old trickle-down approach to job creation is a proven failure. Private jobs are good, but public jobs are necessary to create decent jobs for everyone willing and able to work.

Individuals who work should make enough to support their families, starting with providing them with decent housing, food and clothing. Instead, our politicians refuse to give the poorest workers a pay-raise while CEOs raid their companies to pad their own pockets. We need a minimum wage of at least \$10 an hour while enacting a reasonable maximum wage as FDR proposed back in the '40s. Over 45 million workers - one in three - make under \$10 an hour. The minimum wage traditionally allowed a full-time worker with two dependents to be at the federal poverty level. Today, the minimum wage falls more than three thousand dollars short of that goal.

Hawkins supports federal legislation to cap excessive CEO salaries. He would also empower the true owners of American companies - mainly workers through their pension plans - to vote their shares, rather than the financial managers of such funds. The average worker takes home \$517 per week, while the average CEO of the largest companies takes home \$155,769 per week. The gap between workers and large companies is now greater than 300 to 1. In 1982 the gap was 42 to 1.

Hawkins supports Fair Trade rather than the "free trade" corporate globalization policies of the Democrats and Republicans and calls for the repeal of NAFTA and the World Trade Organization.

Hawkins is an advocate of public ownership of key industries and services, such as energy and health care. We should start with the social ownership of the energy sector, especially oil. When profit matters above all else, then we end up with more pollution, more congestion and more death on the roads. The environment must come before the superprofits of the oil tycoons.

Noting the 47 million Americans without health insurance, Hawkins wants to make the pharmaceutical companies publicly owned. The taxpayer heavily subsidizes the research performed by the drug companies, but we have no say in what drugs are developed or how they are marketed. Drug company profits are driving up health care costs for everyone.

Hawkins supports Medicare for All, national health insurance through a single public payer, so everyone is covered and everyone is free to choose their doctors, clinics, and hospitals.