

# 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: May 14, 2009

Re: 2009 United Way Endorsement

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As the AFL-CIO works with the Obama administration to achieve the hope and promise of the Turn Around America campaign – restoring workers' rights, health care for all and an economy that works for all - millions of American families are struggling with unemployment. Eight million working Americans have lost their jobs since the onset last year of the current economic crisis. Many of these families and individuals have lost their homes, their health insurance and their dreams of sending their kids to college. Many hard-working people are going to local food pantries for help with food for the first time in their lives.

We have responded with a national web site, [UnemploymentLifeline.com](http://UnemploymentLifeline.com), with a range of resources and strategies for the unemployed, as well as connection to local assistance programs. But families in need must be helped directly in the communities where they live. AFL-CIO state and local central bodies, the AFL-CIO Community Services network and Working America are mobilizing local response plans to help with human services and to give the economically displaced a real voice on the issues shaping their lives.

Our primary community partner in this vital daily work is the United Way. In communities large and small from coast to coast, United Way funding makes possible the wide range of high-impact programs and services people need to get back on their feet. United Way also works to encourage adequate funding for vital public programs for the working poor and the unemployed, 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). The work of local United Ways deserves the support of union brothers and sisters in their communities.

Please join me in supporting the 2009 United Way campaign where you live and work. Together, we can help those in real need now while we work to turn America around.