

**Remarks of Senator Barack Obama**  
**International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers**  
**37<sup>th</sup> Grand Lodge Convention**  
**Friday, September 12, 2008**

Hi, everybody. I'm sorry I can't be with you all in Orlando today, but thanks for letting me say a few words. First and foremost, I am honored to have your endorsement. Let me thank your President, Tom Buffenbarger, for his leadership. I want to thank someone you heard from earlier this week for her unwavering efforts in our fight to bring America's working families a new and better day – thank you, Hillary Clinton. And I want to thank all of you – I look forward to seeing all those orange vests out on the campaign trail this fall.

As we speak this morning, your brothers and sisters in Washington State, Oregon and Kansas are preparing for a new day's shift on the picket line. And even though I can't be with them or with you today – I stand with you.

I stand with you because what you're fighting for isn't unreasonable – what you're fighting for is a fair shot at the American dream. It's the idea that your government shouldn't stand idly by while your job is shipped overseas. That your family should have health care when you get sick. That you should be able to put your kids through college even if you're not rich. And that after a lifetime of hard work, you should be able to retire with dignity and security.

But for the past eight years, we've had an administration in Washington that hasn't seen it this way. They sat back and watched as the corporate lobbyists they cozied up to wrote our laws and put their clients' interests ahead of what's fair for the American people. They looked the other way as working families watched their incomes fall, their bills soar, their homes foreclosed, and their savings vanish. They shrugged as more than 3.6 million manufacturing jobs were lost and more than 40,000 factories shuttered up; as too many American workers saw a lifetime of labor rewarded with a pink slip and a dumped pension as their job moves offshore.

Now, I know John McCain is casting himself as an agent of change. But I'm having a little trouble squaring this with his declaration that we've made "great progress economically" over the past eight years. Or his boast that he's voted with President Bush over 90% of the time. Or his assertion that overall, the American people are better off now than they were when George W. Bush came into office.

John McCain just doesn't get it.

Just ask your brothers and sisters at Boeing. Because while it was right for the Pentagon to cancel competition yesterday for the next generation of tankers, it was wrong for John McCain to reward two of the Washington lobbyists who worked against Boeing with jobs on his campaign.

Just ask the Machinists in Pennsylvania who build Harley-Davidsons. Because John McCain didn't just oppose the requirement that the government buy American-made motorcycles, he called Buy American provisions "disgraceful."

Just ask the workers across this country who have seen their jobs outsourced. The very companies that shipped their jobs overseas have been rewarded with billions of dollars in tax breaks that John McCain supports and plans to continue.

So when American workers hear John McCain talk about putting country first, it's fair to ask – which country?

John McCain has said a few things about working families, but he hasn't said how he'll actually work for our families. Not one real proposal about how he'll create jobs to replace those lost on his party's watch, fix the economy they've ruined, or help you build a better life for your family. America's workers can't afford four more years that look exactly like the last eight. It's time to bring about the change this country so desperately needs.

Machinists, let me tell you exactly what that change is.

Change is a President who does everything in his power to create and defend American jobs. Now, I believe in trade, but I also believe that for America to compete and win in the global economy, trade has to work for all Americans. That means making sure our workers are competing on a level playing field. That's why I have consistently opposed NAFTA, and that's why I stood on the Senate floor and said I wouldn't vote for CAFTA. It's why I will enforce our trade agreements and end China's manipulation of its currency. And it's why any trade agreement I would support must contain real, enforceable standards for workers.

To create jobs, I've announced an agenda to revive and strengthen American manufacturing. I'll invest \$150 billion over the next ten years in the green energy sector, creating up to five million new green jobs that pay well and can't be outsourced. I'll create an Advanced Manufacturing Fund that invests in innovation and job creation in places that have been hard hit by the decline in manufacturing. We'll stop slashing funding for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, and start doubling it. And we'll invest in America's long-term competitiveness by putting a college degree within reach for all Americans, and by helping community colleges develop associate degree programs so that the next generation of workers has the skills it needs to compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Here's what else I'll do: I will end the tax breaks for companies that ship our jobs overseas. We shouldn't be giving incentives for corporations to move plants and workers abroad; we should be giving incentives to companies that invest in America's economy and America's future.

That's why I proposed an idea back in 2004 called the Patriot Employer Act. It would cut taxes on companies who create good jobs and maintain their corporate headquarters here in America, pay decent wages, prepare their workers for retirement, and provide their workers with health care. And I will sign it into law when I am President of the United States.

Change is a President who actually stands up for American workers. It's a health care plan that will lower your premiums and cover you no matter what. It's a tax code that doesn't reward the lobbyists who wrote it, but the American workers who deserve it, and it's why I will cut taxes – cut taxes – for 95% of working families when I am President.

Change is a President who's walked on picket lines; who doesn't choke on the word "union"; who lets them do what they do best and organize our workers; and who will finally make the Employee Free Choice Act the law of the land.

Machinists, that's what change is. That's the kind of President I'll be.

Because politics didn't lead me to working people. Working people led me to politics. And because our opponents have had so much fun talking about it lately, let me tell you exactly what it was I did when I went to Chicago more than 25 years ago.

I worked with churches to lift up families in neighborhoods devastated when steel plants were shut down. Thousands of hardworking folks had been laid off and needed help when no one else would stand up for them. They'd given up hope.

So I worked with unions and the city government, and we brought the community together to fight for its common future. We gave job training to the jobless and hope to the hopeless, and block by block, we helped turn those families' futures around and restore the feeling of self-worth that only a good job can provide.

If this sounds familiar, it's because that's what you do. You fight to make sure American workers get a fair shake in a changing economy. You stand up for our families when their government won't stand up for them.

Machinists, I know you're up for a fight. I've seen it. We are now just 53 days from the change that we seek. And if you march with me and organize with me, and knock on those doors, and make those phone calls, and register voters, and talk to your friends and co-workers and neighbors, and if you vote for me, then I promise you this: we will win the general election and then, together, we are going to bring about the real change we need. Thank you.