

**DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM
SUMMARY**

2016

QUICK 'N CLEAN FOUNDATION

By

Larry Quick

Democratic Congressional Candidate

14th Illinois District

2002

INTRODUCTION

The Democratic Party is in need of a **powerful platform** that can be used by all its candidates.

This **platform** must provide a **clear alternative** to the **Republican agenda**.

The platform must provide a **comprehensive** and **concise** statement of the Democratic Party's **plan** to:

1. Rebuild the **economy**
2. Provide high quality affordable **health care**
3. Protect the **environment**
4. **Educate** our children
5. **Defend** our nation
6. Provide **income security**
7. Protect **human rights** at home and abroad

The plan must be fair, provide **economic justice** for all our citizens, be **environmentally sustainable**, take a holistic systems approach, be fiscally responsible, utilize quality leadership principles and **honor human rights** at home and abroad.

Working with experts in the fields of economics, health care, campaign finance reform, education, defense and ecology, this **summary draft** is **Quick 'N Clean's** an attempt at creating a powerful, memorable, and yet easily understood Democratic platform.

Once completed, the entire platform will be fashioned at **four levels** of increasing sophistication. These levels are:

1. An **8-10** letter **acronym** (a memory aid)
2. A short **bullet point** corresponding to each letter of the acronym
3. A **1-4** page **summary** corresponding to each bullet point
4. A **multi-page** position **statement** with references, suggested readings and Internet material corresponding to each **1-4**-page summary

The acronym chosen is as follows:

DEMOCRATIC

- D** Defense excellence YES, waste and mismanagement NO!
- E** Economic recovery for all - strong labor movement, gains broadly shared
- M** Medical care for all - high quality and affordable
- O** Others count - human rights at home and abroad
- C** Clean environment - looking out for our children and grandchildren
- R** Retirement security - Social Security and pensions protected
- A** A plus education for all - high quality and publicly funded
- T** Tax fairness - corporations and wealthy pay their fair share
- I** Income security - labor laws enforced, unemployment and disability protected
- C** Clean elections and clean government - ethics and accountability all around

The following sections of this draft provide a **1-4 page summary** of each of these bullet points.

The completed **4-Level Platform** will provide a blueprint for rebuilding the U.S. economy, providing quality health care, protecting the environment, educating our children, protecting our seniors and defending our nation.

This **summary platform** will be made **available** in **electronic form** upon request to Democratic candidates and committees.

When **completed** the **4-Level Platform** will be **published** on the **Internet** and available to all Democratic candidates and committees.

DEFENSE EXCELLENCE – YES! WASTE AND MISMANAGEMENT – NO!

The absence of war and terrorist acts provides the finest security any nation can enjoy. A foreign policy aimed at promoting and protecting the human rights of all the world's citizens www.un.org/Overview/rights.html is the wisest and most cost- effective defense strategy a nation can pursue.

Complementing a foreign policy promoting human rights, wise international arms treaties and foreign economic assistance, should be a national security policy embracing quality leadership principles www.deming.org/theman/teachings.html, ethics and cost effectiveness.

Our nation needs a first-rate military and homeland security force!

We must accept nothing less!

Unfortunately, hundreds of billions of defense dollars have been lost through waste and mismanagement. Our homeland is far from secure while our civil liberties are being attacked and eroded in the name anti-terrorism. Our service men and women are dying in pursuit of American Empire. America has become the number one enemy of the Islamic World.

Under the Bush Administration we have become less not more secure. Domestic programs are being slashed, police and firefighters are being layed off and our national debt is increasing by \$500 billion per year. The security of the Nation's electrical grid is precarious.

Creative reform is needed in these areas:

- Department of Defense (DOD) mission formulation
- Weapons systems development and procurement
- Budgeting and accounting
- Core readiness (troop training, equipment maintenance and supplies, military exercises)
- Homeland security and first response forces (staffing, training and funding)
- Military and civilian ethics codes and training
- Military and DOD privatization
- Environmental protection
- Leadership and management philosophies
- U.S. support of international weapons treaties
- Peacekeeping training
- Use of land mines, cluster bombs and uranium-depleted shells
- Readiness of National Guard and reserve units
- Delivery of adequate veterans benefits

The following measures should be implemented:

- Redirect DOD's mission from empire building to the protection of human rights at home and abroad
- Creation of truly independent policy boards for weapons development and procurement
- Reduction of Pentagon budget by 15%
- Overhaul of DOD accounting practices with installation of effective audits, system reviews and financial controls
- Enhancement of military core readiness through provision of adequate and cost-effective troop training, equipment maintenance, supply acquisition and vital military exercises
- Development of an integrated national homeland security plan covering the use of explosive, chemical and biological weapons as well as other forms of sabotage
- Adequate staffing, training and funding for first responders to terrorist attacks (police, firefighters, paramedics and other key personnel)
- Creation and strict enforcement of a code of ethics for military, DOD and civilian contractors preventing fraud and protecting human rights
- Full U.S. support and participation with the International Criminal Court in bringing all perpetrators of war crimes (including Americans) to justice
- DOD compliance with local, national and international environmental protection laws, rules and regulations
- Adoption of quality leadership principles (focusing on holistic systems management, continuous improvement and ethical human relations) throughout the Armed Forces and the DOD
- Full U.S. support for all existing weapons treaties (including non-proliferation, ABM, START I and II)
- Cessation in use of land mines, cluster bombs and uranium-depleted shells
- Adequate peacekeeping training for troops to be assigned such duties
- Enhanced readiness of National Guard and reserve units through adequate recruiting, training and funding
- Reversal of military and DOD privatization policies
- Adequate funding to maintain and enhance veterans' benefits (including the elimination of concurrent receipt offset to reduce earned pensions by disability payments received)
- Promotion of U.S. energy independence and a just solution for a Palestinian homeland
- Proper maintenance and effective security covering the national power grid and energy production facilities
- Creation of a cabinet-level Department of Peace focused on non-violent conflict resolution

Taken together these measures will go far in creating secure borders, freedom from terrorist attack and a world without war.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY FOR ALL – STRONG LABOR MOVEMENT, GAINS BROADLY SHARED

The U.S. Economy is in a state of serious decline.

The Global Economy started its downward spiral in 1997 when an attack by currency speculators caused the collapse of the Thai Baht (Thailand's national currency) and triggered a financial crisis in the Far East.

This financial crisis caused by the flight of investment capital and International Monetary Fund (IMF) mismanagement, started a deep and protracted recession in Thailand, Malaysia, South Korea, Japan and other Far East nations. The unraveling of the global economy that started in the Far East has spread to Russia, South America, Central America, Mexico, Europe and now to the United States.

In today's global economy U.S. workers must compete in the same labor market as Chinese workers earning less than \$8 per day. The deep global recession that started in 1997 has created a desperate situation for U.S. workers. Wall Street's relentless drive for cost cutting, downsizing and profit maximization combined with corporate fraud and mismanagement has made a bad situation desperate.

The **Bush Administration** and the **Republican Congress** have **no plan** to reverse our national economic decline, to rebuild U.S. Economy and to strengthen the Global Economy. Their "economic plan" has focused on **massive tax cuts** for **corporations** and the **wealthy**, awarding **lucrative no-bid** government **contracts** to friends and supporters, and **lax enforcement** of business **regulations**.

No relief is in sight for the working middle class and the working poor!

Any meaningful plan to reverse our nation's economic decline and bring about a broadly shared prosperity must include the following elements:

- A strong labor movement with strict enforcement of tough labor laws and stiff penalties for employer violations
- A national manufacturing policy that identifies new global product market opportunities, nurtures U.S. entrants with training, tax and R&D subsidies and imposes stiff tariffs and labor exploitation taxes on firms that import goods made with exploited or slave labor
- The passage of local content laws for key manufactured products

- Public investment in a wide variety of wealth creating assets including K-14 education, mass transportation, energy efficient and pollution control technologies, fiber optic communication networks, roads, highways, bridges, job training, apprenticeship programs, and education and training in quality leadership principles
- Elimination of IMF, World Bank and World Trade Organization policies aimed at enriching banks, investors and multinational corporations at the expense of consumers and workers around the world
- Widespread implementation of quality leadership principles in all sectors of our economy www.deming.org/theman/teachings.html
- Passage and strict enforcement of laws and regulations protecting consumer and employee safety
- Strictly enforced tax laws that require corporations and wealthy individuals to pay their fair share
- Federal budgets that over time reduce rather than swell the U.S. Government's six-trillion dollar debt
- Adequate financial assistance to state governments allowing each state to return to fiscal health and balanced budgets
- Passage and strict enforcement of anti-trust legislation preventing the formation of unregulated monopoly power in any industry
- Substantial reduction of government waste and financial mismanagement through passage of effective clean election laws that provide adequate, but limited, public funding for political campaigns
- Passage and strict enforcement of environmental protection laws and regulations making prosperity and a high quality of life possible for future generations
- Comprehensive unemployment insurance coverage (with adequate funding and benefits) for all qualified workers including qualified contract and part-time employees
- Passage and strict enforcement of laws and regulations protecting investors, creditors, and pension beneficiaries from fraud and wrong doing in the banking, insurance, securities and public accounting industries

MEDICAL CARE FOR ALL – HIGH QUALITY AND AFFORDABLE

Access to high quality affordable health care is essential for **every** American.

As a nation, we have the **resources** to provide this care for **all** our citizens, as well as for our guests.

We have the **knowledge**, the skilled **professionals**, the **technology** and the **funds**.

America is home to over **600,000** physicians, **two million** registered nurses, highly skilled therapists, state-of-the-art medical technology and modern facilities.

Despite these resources, our health care system is **broken** and **out of control**.

We currently spend an average of **\$6,000 per capita** in health care. This amounts to **14%** of our **GDP** and is **twice** the amount per capita of any other nation.

Forty-two million Americans are without health insurance.

It is estimated that each year **18,000** people die because they are not covered.

Skyrocketing costs, coupled with an **employer-financed** health-insurance **system**, are forcing thousands of additional Americans to join the ranks of the uninsured each month.

Skyrocketing health care costs place many American workers at a **competitive disadvantage** in the global workforce.

It is estimated that **trillions of dollars** will be spent on health care in 2014 and beyond.

All of our citizens deserve coverage under a **publicly funded national health insurance system** providing the following benefits (delivered principally by the private sector):

- High quality and prompt medical care
- Prescription drugs and medicines
- Home care for the aging and disabled
- High quality mental health care
- Education on illness prevention and healthy lifestyles

These important goals will be achieved through:

- A **single-payer** health care system modeled after the best qualities of the Canadian and the other **twenty** or **so** successful national designs
- The application of **quality management principles** throughout the entire health care system
- The widespread availability of **generic medicines** made possible by patent law reform
- Healthy **lifestyle** and **dietary change** made possible by effective and widely available health education facilities and programs

Current funding levels will be reduced due to:

- The **elimination of administrative costs** due to a single-payer system
- New efficiencies resulting from the application of **quality management principles** www.deming.org/theman/teachings.html
- Low cost generic drugs made possible through **patent law reform**
- **Reduced illness** owing to healthy lifestyle and dietary changes made by millions of Americans

Funding will be provided by federal and state governments and by **small charges** to patients based on **ability to pay**.

Employers will no longer **bear** the **burden** of providing health care benefits for their employees.

Employees and their families will **keep** their health insurance should they become unemployed.

Senior citizens will **no longer** be forced to **choose** between food and prescription drugs.

Employee **productivity** will rise as health is **maintained** and **improved**.

America will join the **twenty** or **so** wealthy industrialized nations who have developed **successful** national health insurance systems for **all** their citizens.

Quality of life will **soar!**

OTHERS COUNT – HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME AND ABROAD

The moral test of any nation is the way it treats **all** its citizens and **all** its global neighbors.

Although social customs vary, a broad set of human rights* was identified by a group of wise and compassionate world leaders following World War II.

The superb work of these leaders was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948 and is known as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.
www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

This Declaration is comprised of 30 articles, which serve as a “**common standard of achievement**” for **all peoples and nations**. These articles establish rights in the areas of employment, education, citizenship, travel, marriage, religious expression, property ownership, security of person, income security, legal due process and democratic governance.

Although the ethical principles used to formulate the Declaration can be found in all or most of the World’s great religions, this moral code of national and international conduct is not based on any particular religious doctrine or sacred scripture.

The ethical principles found in the Declaration are truly universal and can be embraced by all nations and religious groups.

Human rights for all must be the foundation of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.

A government that honors and protects human rights ensures for all its citizens and foreign visitors:

- **Civil liberties**
- **Economic justice**
- **Due process of law**
- **Humane treatment for those charged or convicted of crimes**
- **Quality and accessible health care**
- **Environmental sustainability**

Human rights **respected** lay the foundation for peace, freedom and justice throughout the world.

*A human right is a genuine claim to the legitimate satisfaction of a natural human need. A natural human need is a need with which every human being is born. Natural human needs include the need for food, water, shelter, physical protection, liberty, education, family relations and health care.

CLEAN ENVIROMENT – LOOKING OUT FOR OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN

We will turn the tide!

We will preserve and protect our eco-system!

We will ensure that our children, grandchildren, and the generations that follow will enjoy the blessings of nature that we have taken for granted!

Our civilization stands at the **crossroads**.

America can and will make creative difference.

Highly respected ecologist, Lester R. Brown outlines the current **signs of stress** on our climate, water, and biological base:

- Rising temperatures
- Melting ice caps
- Rising sea levels
- More destructive storms
- Rivers drained dry
- Falling water tables
- Water scarcity
- Fisheries collapsing
- Forests shrinking
- Rangelands deteriorating
- Soils eroding
- Species disappearing

Although the signs of stress are many, a rising wave of environmental awareness and newly developed technologies offer us great hope.

To reverse the stress on our climate, water and the plants and animals that constitute our planet's biological base, the following measures will be taken:

- Public and private investment in energy efficient technologies
- Passage and strict enforcement of antipollution and energy conservation laws
- Development of high quality, affordable and accessible mass transportation
- Smart growth practices based on compact land use, infill development* and revitalization of urban centers
- Widespread adoption of organic farming methods
- Planting of trees and protection of forests
- Development of an economy run by pollution free wind, solar and hydrogen power
- Widespread recycling
- Redesign of cities for pedestrian rather than automobile use
- Creation of an extensive network of safe bicycle paths in urban areas
- Greatly improved productivity in accessing and conserving water

To accelerate the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy, tax laws will be passed providing powerful incentives for investment in non-polluting sources of power.

The United States will actively sponsor and support international treaties, conventions and protocols designed to protect the environment from global warming, ozone depletion, deforestation, soil erosion, acid rain, shrinking fisheries and all other threats to environmental degradation.

Partnerships involving national governments, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, businesses, universities, media outlets and citizen organizations will create the foundation for economic and environmental transformation.

**Infill development is the construction of new homes, businesses and other buildings in cities and suburban areas that have open space, but that have already experienced significant development. Existing rural areas remain untouched by suburban sprawl.*

RETIREMENT SECURITY – SOCIAL SECURITY AND PENSIONS PROTECTED

A **secure retirement** is essential to **peace of mind** and a high **quality of life** for our citizens. **Social Security** and **pension funds** are the major sources of retirement income for most Americans. They must be **protected**.

Social Security

The **Bush Administration** is attempting to **privatize** our nation's **Social Security System**, through the creation **privately** administered **individual accounts**. Also **supporting** this effort are **House** and **Senate Republicans**.

The alleged reason for this **risky initiative** – the impending bankruptcy of the **Social Security Trust Fund** *

The **Social Security Board of Trustees** recently released an analysis projecting **solvency** of the **Social Security System** through the year **2037**.

No financial collapse is imminent.

Under the **Republican plan**, approximately **15%** of the **payroll taxes** collected from employers and employees would be **redirected** to **individual accounts**. The **funds** in the individual accounts would be **invested** in the **stock market** and the accounts would be **administered** by **private** businesses.

The result – a **stock market gamble** that shifts the risk of market fluctuations to individuals and away from the federal government.

A number of **undesirable consequences** will likely result:

- Acceleration of the date when the Federal Government will have to dip into the Social Security Trust Fund to pay benefits to retirees
- Reduction in benefits to future retirees
- Excessive administrative complexity and cost
- Conflicts of interest between federal agencies regulating corporations and social security administrators seeking to maximize the stock market returns for individual investment accounts
- Cuts in healthcare, education, environmental protection and other vital services as lost payroll tax revenues, will necessitate the use of general fund tax revenues to pay retirees

*The **Social Security Trust Fund** is an investment fund owned and operated by the Federal Government. Excess cash is invested in U.S government securities, which are insured, by the full faith and credit of the United States Government.

Rather than weakening the solvency of the **Social Security System** through a stock market gamble, the following measures should be implemented:

- Sound, environmentally responsible, economic stimulus policies
- A gradual increase in the minimum wage to \$8.50 per hour
- Strict enforcement of laws supporting the right of workers to organize and bargain collectively for better wages and benefits
- All wages will be subject to social security payroll taxes
- A modest increase in the interest rate paid by the U.S. Treasury, on U.S. government securities, held by the Social Security Trust Fund

These measures will assure the **future solvency** of the **Social Security System** and no loss of benefits to retirees.

Private Pension Funds

Retirement income from privately administered pension plans has been **under assault**.

The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995 passed by Congress, over President Clinton's veto, opened the floodgates for accounting and securities fraud.

This legislation, according to attorney **William S. Lerach**, amounts to a **defense lawyer's "wish list"** of new tools to **delay** and **defeat** securities **fraud claims** and **harass** and **intimidate** plaintiffs' **counsel**.

Emboldened by the **substantially reduced likelihood** financial and legal penalties, **unscrupulous** CEOs, underwriters, bankers and others have engaged **massive** accounting and securities **fraud**. This fraud has caused **tens of thousands** of employees and retired individuals to sustain **substantial** pension fund **losses**.

Some of the most recent **corporate fraud cases** include **Enron, WorldCom, Tyco International, Global Crossing, Merck, Xerox, Arthur Andersen, and Qwest Communications**.

The collapse of over-inflated stock prices (resulting from this fraud) has **devastated** worker **401(k) plans** and employer administered **pension plans**. The result will be substantial **loss** of future retirement **income**

To **enhance** the **security** of pension funds and retirement income, the following **measures should be undertaken**:

- Strict enforcement of all laws intended to protect employees, investors and pension fund beneficiaries (including the **1974 ERISA Act** and the **2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act**)
- Full staffing and funding for agencies created to enforce these laws including the **Department of Labor**, the **Treasury**, the **Internal Revenue Service** and the **Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC)**
- Repeal of **The Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995**

Furthermore, **new strictly enforced federal legislation** should be **passed** to provide:

- Increased benefits to workers covered under the **PBGC** federal insurance program www.pbgc.gov
- A halt in the conversion of defined benefit pension plans to cash balance plans
- Worker trustee representation on pension plan boards
- Employee access to unbiased pension management advice
- Freedom to sell stock acquired through employee stock option plans after three years
- Immediate disclosure about executives selling company stock
- Effective new whistleblower protections
- Extended statute of limitations for fraud cases
- Effective provisions to allow victims of pension fund fraud to recover losses in corporate bankruptcy proceedings.

The implementation of these measures (coupled with the passage of effective federal and state clean election laws www.newrules.org/gov/clean.html) will do much to provided current and future retirees with the financial security they deserve.

A + EDUCATION FOR ALL – HIGH QUALITY AND PUBLICLY FUNDED

The future of our children and our nation depends on high quality, affordable and accessible K-14 education.

Public education must be provided through adequate federal and state funding with only modest reliance on local property taxes.

Cuts in corporate welfare and wasteful defense spending will provide significant funds for our schools, colleges, and universities.

Once available, this funding will allow class sizes to be generally limited to 30 students.

The following measures must be undertaken to assure high quality, affordable and accessible education for all our citizens:

- Fully funded K-14 public education
- Expanded financial assistance to public colleges and universities
- Expanded federal college tuition support for private colleges and universities
- Extensive parent participation programs
- Widespread introduction of classes in healthy living and life style effectiveness
- Expansion of pre-school, after school and extra-curricular activities
- Creation of specialized learning academies within large high schools providing paid internship and apprenticeship programs
- Ending the use of school test scores to determine funding levels, faculty and administrator compensation, and faculty and administrator retention
- Curriculum additions designed to develop multiple intelligences including emotional, musical, artistic, kinesthetic and spatial

Children begin life full of inner motivation, self-esteem, dignity, cooperation, curiosity and joy in learning.

Over time the forces of destruction in our schools crush out these qualities. These forces include:

- Forced distribution of grades
- Gold stars
- Competition
- Rating
- Ranking

High achievement and joy in learning will result from the application of quality leadership principles within classroom and within school administrations.

David Langford, Lee Jenkins and W. Edwards Deming have shown us the way.

Education based upon quality leadership reflects profound understanding of the following areas:

- Systems
- Individual and group psychology
- Learning theory, effective teaching and use of the scientific method
- Systemic versus isolated causes of poor academic performance
- Methods for continuous improvement in teaching and administration

Teachers and administrators who have successfully applied quality leadership principles make the following comments*:

- “I used to think in terms of remediation; now I understand variation.” (High school teacher)
- “I used to insist on finishing the book no matter what; now I focus more deeply on learning.” (High school history teacher)
- “I used to give students just one shot at a test; now I allow them to continue learning concepts they missed, and improve their grades.” (High school math teacher)
- “I used to use the word change; now I use improve.” (Superintendent)
- “I used to give all the rules for the semester on the first day of class; now I brainstorm with students about how we will work together.” (Sixth-grade teacher)
- “I used to decide on my room arrangement; now I have students... select the best location for things. Instead of my classroom, it’s becoming *our* classroom.” (Fifth-grade teacher)
- “I used to threaten with grades; now I spend more time in feedback sessions addressed to improvement.” (High school science teacher)
- I used to think I should know how to do everything myself; now I ask my colleagues and students for suggestions.” (High school math teacher)
- “I used to be relieved when someone did poorly on my tests, since it validated the difficulty of the exam; now I know that tests are only a way to see what has to happen next.” (High school English teacher)
- I used to keep supplies locked up so that students couldn’t get to them; now I have students who ‘own’ the supply process.” (Fourth-grade teacher)
- “I used to have the art teacher come to my history class and lecture about art from a particular era; now students do this themselves.” (High-school history teacher)
- Quotes taken from **Orchestrating Learning With Quality** by Langford and Cleary

TAX FAIRNESS – CORPORATIONS AND WEALTHY PAY THEIR FAIR SHARE

Experience has shown that **often** the most effective and efficient way to provide **critical** infrastructure, services and protections is through **publicly owned** and operated agencies.

Goods and services **best** provided by the public sector include:

- Highways
- Bridges
- Airports
- Railroads
- Police
- Water
- Sewer
- Corrections
- Defense
- Courts
- Parks
- Air Traffic Control
- Airport Security
- Social Security
- Health Insurance

Other services **effectively** and **efficiently** provided by public agencies include:

- Electric power
- Telephone
- Television
- Radio
- Schools
- Universities
- Hospitals
- Libraries

When communities fail to own and operate these key service agencies, private monopolies end up “owning” the citizens.

Public education, critical social services, public safety and infrastructure systems require **adequate funding** through **taxes** levied upon **businesses, individuals and estates**.

Starting in the **early 1980s** a disturbing pattern began to emerge – **corporations** and **wealthy** individuals began to pay **less** than their **fair share** of federal taxes.

Under the **Bush** Administration this pattern accelerated rapidly with **three** successive and **massive** federal tax cuts (**2001, 2002, 2003**).

Corporations and the wealthiest **one percent** of Americans will receive a disproportionate share (**over half**) of the tax breaks awarded over the next **10** years (2003-2013). Tax and budget experts are predicting a rise in our national debt from over **\$13 trillion** to as much as **\$15 trillion**. Each American's **estimated** share of the **2013** national debt would average **\$43,333** (\$15 trillion/300 million citizens).

The **interest cost** of servicing this debt (**\$400-\$500 billion** per year) will have a devastating impact on social security, education, Medicare, environmental protection and other vital government programs.

The impact of lost federal tax revenues is already being felt in virtually every state across the nation. **Collectively** states faced an estimated budget deficit of over **\$100 billion** for the fiscal year ending **June 30, 2014**.

Reduced federal tax revenues translate into little or no federal assistance to see state governments through this serious fiscal crisis. Many states are predicting budget shortfalls close in excess of, **\$1 billion**. **Education, health care, law enforcement** and **vital public services** are being cut back or eliminated.

Redistribution of after-tax income is in favor of the **wealthiest one percent** of American households is one of the most **unjust** aspects of the recent federal tax cuts. Citizen's for Tax Justice www.ctj.org writes:

“As a result of the three major tax cuts enacted at President Bush's instigation in 2001, 2002 and 2003, taxes on the best-off **one percent** of Americans will fall by **17 percent** by the end of the decade. For the remaining **99 percent** of taxpayers, the average tax reduction will be **5 percent**.”

Corporate tax breaks are creating a serious drain on federal tax revenues. According to Citizens for Tax Justice, corporate tax subsidies are now costing the federal treasury about **hundreds of billion dollars** per year. These corporate tax breaks come in the form of excessive deductions, exemptions and credits.

Offshore tax haven laws, allow U.S. corporations to incorporate in a foreign country with the sole aim of avoiding payment of federal income taxes. This demonstrates a serious **lack of patriotism** and concern for one's country.

Citizens for Tax Justice writes:

“A startling surge in corporate tax welfare will drive corporate income taxes over 2003-2004 down to an estimated **1.3** percent of gross domestic product*. That will be the lowest level since the early 1980s – and the second lowest level in at least **six** decades.”

From **1942-1980** federal corporate tax payments have ranged from **3-7** percent of gross domestic product.

In addition to cuts in individual and corporate income taxes, the Bush Administration is seeking to repeal **all** estate and gift taxes by **2009**. The loss to the federal treasury over the next **10** years (2003-2013), according to President Bush’s own statistics, will cost **\$236 billion**. According to some tax experts the cost could run **much higher**.

Few citizens enjoy paying taxes.

Wise citizens realize that many services, protections and infrastructure systems are **best** provided by publicly owned and operated agencies.

These agencies must be **adequately** funded with tax revenues.

Responsible citizens recognize that working people should not be paying a **greater portion** of their incomes in taxes than wealthy individuals and businesses.

It is time to restore **tax fairness** to our nation.

It is time for wealthy individuals and corporations to pay their fair share to the nation that has made possible their prosperity.

**Gross domestic product is defined as the final value of goods and services produced within the United States.*

INCOME SECURITY – LABOR LAWS ENFORCED, UNEMPLOYMENT AND DISABILITY PROTECTED

Introduction

America's health and prosperity depend on decent wages and benefits for all employees.

Consumer spending comprises approximately 70 % of the U.S. Economy.

A prosperous working class is essential to a prosperous and vital democracy.

Worker Rights

Congressman **Dennis Kucinich** (D-Ohio) asserts that Americans have a right to:

- A job
- A safe workplace
- Decent wages and benefits
- Organize and be represented
- Grieve unacceptable working conditions
- Strike
- Fair compensation for injuries on the job
- Sue if injured by a negligent employer
- Security of pensions and retirement benefits
- Participate in the political process

Congressman Kucinich is right!

These rights to be enjoyed by **all** Americans require the passage and strict enforcement of federal labor laws.

These laws must carry with them substantial civil and criminal penalties for violation.

Effective enforcement requires full funding and staffing of federal regulatory agencies including:

- The Employment Standards Administration
- The Employee Benefits Security Administration
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration
- The Bureau of International Labor Affairs

Full funding of all other federal and state agencies regulating employer-employee relationships is also essential.

Fair Trade

American wages, benefits, and job security are being eroded through the policies of the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Working in concert with large U.S. multinational corporations, these organizations have created a global trading system that allows the exploitation of workers around the world.

Workers are not free to organize and bargain for decent wages, benefits and working conditions. Environmental destruction is pervasive.

The U.S. must withdraw from participation in the World Trade Organization and NAFTA and actively work for the creation of treaties and trade agreements that honor the human rights of all the world's citizens www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.

Exploitive “free trade” must be replaced with bilateral “fair trade” that promotes **economic justice, human rights and environmental sustainability**.

The United States Government must use its considerable influence and power to support the rights of workers around the world to organize for decent wages, benefits, working conditions and to promote environmental safeguards.

Decent wages and benefits in America and throughout the world, will fuel a prosperous global economy, making economic justice for all people a real possibility.

Worker Safety

America has approximately 7 million work places. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the federal agency responsible for looking after the worker health and safety, has roughly 1200 inspectors to monitor these workplaces. The following measures should be undertaken:

- Substantial funding increases for OSHA's operating budget
- Substantial expansion of the voluntary employer protection (VPP) program
- Significant improvements in quality and quantity of inspector training and education
- Significant improvement in the process used to recruit qualified health and safety inspectors
- Substantial expansion of public education outreach efforts
- Imposition of substantial penalties for willful employer violation of OSHA safety rules and standards

The national emphasis should be on designing safety into workplaces. The goal must be prevention, rather than after the fact inspection and penalty assessment.

Safe workplaces will exert a powerful downward pressure on the cost worker's compensation and on the cost of Social Security disability payments paid for by taxpayers.

Worker's Compensation

Many American's believe widespread employee fraud pervades state administered worker compensation insurance programs. Recent studies show that of the billions of dollars paid out in benefits, only one or two percent of this money is lost to employee fraud. A well-funded and efficiently administered worker's compensation program is the best interest of all Americans.

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/workplce/etc/fraud.html

Recent state legislative "reform" efforts have made it more difficult for legitimate claimants (employees with real job injuries) to receive the insurance compensation that they deserve.

Reduced payment liability encourages employers to expose workers to unsafe conditions to speed up the work and increase profits.

www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/357kmotherjones.html

The following measures should be undertaken to strengthen worker's compensation:

- Passage of a federal law prohibiting employer self insurance against worker compensation claims
- Create a publicly managed non-profit worker's compensation insurance agency to set insurance premiums and administer payment of benefits
- Passage of a federal law allowing workers to select their own physician for medical care
- Strict enforcement of work safety laws
- Expansion of voluntary employer health and safety improvement programs (OSHA VPP)
- Expansion of OSHA outreach programs educating the public on workplace health and safety issues

Employers must not be permitted to provide unsafe working conditions. Employers must not be allowed to shift worker compensation costs to employees and taxpayers.

Social Security Disability Income Protection

When workplace safety programs are inadequate and worker compensation benefits insufficient, disabled workers turn to Social Security www.nosscr.org/hallfaq.html for income protection and health care coverage.

Adequate federal funding and the application of quality leadership principles www.deming.org/theman/teachings.html will assure that disabled workers are provided with the long-term income and healthcare benefits that they deserve.

CLEAN ELECTIONS AND CLEAN GOVERNMENT – ETHICS AND ACCOUNTABILITY ALL AROUND

Clean Elections

The connection between private money and government policy must be broken.

In the 2010 election cycle, candidates for public office raised and spent billions of dollars to finance their campaigns. Much of this money came from corporations, their employees and wealthy individuals. These donors become the real constituents of elected officials.

Workers, the aged, those who are ill and the working poor often have little if any access to their elected officials. This is especially true at the federal and state levels of government.

The states of **Maine**, **Connecticut** and **Arizona** have discovered a way to break the link between campaign finance and government policy.

Each of these states has passed “clean election laws.” The laws vary in detail, but each provides public funding and campaign spending limits for “clean election candidates” running for state offices. Participation in these programs is voluntary, and candidates can still elect to run a campaign funded with private money.

Election funding will be provided through the elimination of government waste, mismanagement and cost overruns that the current finance system encourages.

Because these **publicly funded** campaign finance programs are **voluntary**, limitations on freedom of political expression do not exist. www.newrules.org/gov/clean.html

Clean Government

Ethical practice in government, business and education is the foundation for a just and prosperous nation. These social obligations will be supported through strict enforcement of laws and regulations protecting citizens, consumers, employees, investors and the environment.

Regulatory agencies will be adequately staffed and funded.

Comprehensive campaign finance reform will lay the foundation for:

- **Economic justice for all Americans**
- **Human rights at home and abroad**
- **Environmental sustainability**