

Monthly Column, September 2016  
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## **Will Working People Allow an Anti-Worker Extremist to Become President?**

Part of my responsibility as a labor leader elected by the working men and women of California's Building Trades is to research the choices that face us at election time, and how those choices will affect the quality of life for blue collar workers and their families.

I want to figure out which person running for office will help working people the most, and which one will hurt us the worst. Then I want to use my position to help the candidate that will be best for working families, and stop the one that will hurt us. We can't relax our efforts on behalf of California's construction workers and their families until the election is done.

That is why, at the risk of being repetitive, I am writing this month to once again remind working people about what is at stake for them and their families in this election year.

Whether we like it or not, the fact is that the next President of the United States will be one of two people: former First Lady, United States

Senator, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; or billionaire tycoon Donald Trump.

So let me say to you one more time: Donald Trump is monstrously hostile to the interests of working people, leaving Secretary Clinton as the only reasonable choice to represent working men and women. She can and will improve the quality of life for blue collar workers as our President.

Trump is entirely committed to anti-union right-to-work policies, opposes a livable minimum wage, and in fact stated bluntly that he wants lower wages for all working people in general. He favors policies that destroy workers' right to organize and collectively bargain. He has refused to recognize his own hotel employees' votes to unionize and won't negotiate with them in good faith. He brags about having profited from the real estate collapse, greedily and happily snatching underpriced properties while millions of working families were losing their homes, and says he hopes for the opportunity to do it again. He brags about using bankruptcies as a pro-active business tool, to deliberately avoid paying what he knows he owes to his construction contractors and workers, driving some themselves into bankruptcy. Many of these companies had successfully competed in the construction industry for decades until the day they did a project for Donald Trump.

To some working people, Trump's unconventional blunt and incendiary style, contrasted against the hyper-partisan gridlock and dysfunction that permeates our politics today, may have a certain populist appeal to it.

But none of that changes who he really is, and what a Trump presidency would mean for working families. It would be bleak.

I wrote an article here a few years ago entitled “*A Tale of Two States,*” emphasizing how, in a recent election, California workers had benefited by electing a Governor and members of the Senate and Assembly who cared deeply about working families in our state, in contrast with the disastrous consequences for working people in the state of Michigan from the very different election results there. Running as populist, unconventional outsiders, far right Republicans wooed and appealed to the values of union working people, and sadly, won the votes of too many unionized workers, including Building Trades workers, and took over Michigan’s government.

But they were wolves in sheep’s clothing, and once in power, reverted to their true nature, taking a terrible toll on the very people who helped elect them. They rammed through a right-to-work law, wiping out the hard-won right of working people to organize and bargain for their wages and benefits collectively. Their collective power shattered, Michigan workers found themselves facing lower wages and fewer benefits, and that bleak future of which I spoke.

Workers are being similarly tempted by Donald Trump today. If we succumb to that temptation, the results will be as terrible across the country as they have so sadly been for Michigan.

You can read that column here: <http://sbctc.org/doc.asp?id=4302>

I recently received a communication from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, representing the interests of millions of workers across America, reviewing the records and policies of both candidates. “The choice is clear,” he said. “Unless we want to see more jobs outsourced,

more obstacles to supporting our families and even more attacks on our rights, we cannot elect Donald Trump as president.”

Will we let that happen? Will we allow Trump to become president and destroy our economy, our families’ future, and indeed our entire quality of life? The answer is entirely up to us. Please remember to vote to protect the best interests of your families.