

# American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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## AFL-CIO Political Backgrounder

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## Working Families Mobilize in 2012 to Elect Leadership to Rebuild Our Economy

This year, the AFL-CIO is mobilizing working men and women in an unprecedented effort to elect working family heroes who will create an economy that works for all. Through our cutting-edge field program, we will reach out to and engage more than 8 million union members, family members and retirees. We also will talk to nonunion families through Workers' Voice and through Working America, the community affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Workers' Voice aims to take on the special interest, big money PACs by martialing the resources of everyday workers for grassroots activities.

## Working Families – Creating a Historical Political Realignment in 2012

- The AFL-CIO 2012 grassroots mobilization is our broadest, most ambitious and sophisticated member mobilization ever.
- More than 400,000 union volunteers will be activated and deployed, in addition to hundreds of thousands of members from diverse allied organizations, including MoveOn, National Council of La Raza and the NAACP.
- The AFL-CIO will reach working-class voters in 24 priority states and will be engaged in every viable Senate race, more than 50 House races and more than 150 targeted state legislative races.
- The AFL-CIO top-tier states in 2012 are Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.
- The AFL-CIO 2012 grassroots mobilization will employ cutting-edge voter communication techniques to ensure that our members are receiving the information they want on the candidates and issues and that volunteers' time is used as efficiently as possible to maximize impact.

## The Working Family Influence

Working- and lower-middle-class voters—defined as those in households making less than \$75,000 a year—made up 58 percent of the national vote in 2008 and 57 percent in 2010, according to exit polls. Those numbers are even higher in battleground states like Ohio, Florida and Wisconsin. These voters play a key role in elections, helping to reset the direction of politics twice in the past four years.

As a group, these voters are among the most hurt by this struggling economy. Their votes will be essential to electoral outcomes in 2012—and their participation will be vital to governing. Working America and Workers' Voice are key to reaching out to this critical voting bloc.

### 2012 PROJECTED WORKING CLASS SHARE OF THE ELECTORATE

Florida	63%
Massachusetts	58%
Michigan	70%
Ohio	65%
Pennsylvania	68%
Nevada	66%

### PERCENT OF WORKING-CLASS VOTERS

Nationwide	2008	2010
	58%	57%
Florida	62%	67%
New Mexico	66%	N/A
Ohio	67%	67%
Pennsylvania	55%	58%
Wisconsin	66%	69%

SOURCE: CNN Exit Polling

More than 250,000 union volunteers took to the streets in the largest independent voter mobilization in history.

### Union Families Made the Difference in 2008

Union voters played an important role in President Obama's historic victory. AFL-CIO union members across battleground states supported Obama by a whopping 68-30 margin.

### 2008 UNION HOUSEHOLD VOTE DENSITY

State	Share of Electorate	Vote for Obama	Vote for McCain
Michigan	34%	67%	31%
Nevada	23%	62%	36%
Ohio	28%	56%	43%
Pennsylvania	27%	62%	37%
Wisconsin	26%	61%	39%
National	18%	N/A	N/A

## **Workers' Voice**

Workers' Voice represents and fights for all working families, union and nonunion, around political campaigns, legislative issues and holding elected officials accountable.

As mega-millionaires like Mitt Romney, the Koch brothers and large corporations try and buy our political and legislative process, Workers' Voice will activate and energize networks of working families to have their voices heard by coming together to organize their friends, family, co-workers and neighbors, powered by cutting-edge technology and old-fashioned energy.

## **Working America: 1 + 1 = 2 Million**

Working America, the community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, reaches working-class people in the persuadable middle. With more than 3 million members—and 20,000 face-to-face conversations every week in working-class neighborhoods, Working America will reach 1 million targeted voters this election cycle. Those targeted voters will connect with their friends and families, enabling Working America members to reach an additional 1 million voters.

Working America organizers and members will have face-to-face conversations in working-class communities through large-scale neighborhood canvassing. Member-activists will participate in phone banking, tele-town halls, online outreach and regular community gatherings like our "Women's Postcard Campaign" parties, where women gather to send postcards to women swing-voters urging them to vote for working family candidates. Working America members vote overwhelmingly for endorsed candidates, outperforming those within their same demographic by as many as 50 points. In 2008, they voted for President Obama by a 2-to-1 margin.

- People contacted by Working America vote, on average, at a 7 percent higher rate than their neighbors.
- An Analyst Institute evaluation showed that Working America gained 15 votes for every 100 voters spoken to—*the highest persuasion effect they'd ever seen.*

With wealthy special interests spending billions of dollars on advertising, Working America provides the human touch that cuts through the noise.

## **Voting Rights Protection Program**

My Vote, My Right, the AFL-CIO's 2012 Voting Rights Protection Program, is a nonpartisan effort designed to ensure that eligible voters are aware of and educated on the new voting laws to ensure that voters are able to vote fairly and without intimidation on Election Day.

The significance of voting rights and election protection efforts this election year cannot be overstated, given the potential obstacles that voters face this November. In various states, strict photo ID laws have been enacted; voters' names have been purged from voter rolls; early voting days and hours have been shortened; and attempts have been made to thwart third-party voter registration efforts.

## What 'My Vote, My Right' Will Do

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

My Vote, My Right will implement non-partisan voter protection activities in six targeted states: Nevada, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida. The program will focus on three areas of work: Election Administration Advocacy; Voter Education with affiliated unions and coalition partners; and Voter Rights Protection at the polls through poll worker and poll monitor recruitment.

In September, the program will shift its focus to on-the-ground activities and ensuring the right to vote is protected on Election Day. We have a goal of recruiting at least 2,000 poll workers/monitors to work in precincts within targeted counties in our six states and will provide training by Oct. 15. In the area of election protection, the AFL-CIO's Lawyers Coordinating Committee, in coordination with the AFL-CIO's coalition partners, will meet with elected officials before Sept. 31 to address potential barriers to voting and to ensure that polling places are adequately resourced. The federation will communicate with at least 40 percent of our union membership on voting law changes in our targeted states.

### Meet Mr. 1%

#### Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan And Their Harmful Vision for Working Families

The campaign will communicate the stark choice between two very different visions for our country's future. We will expose the Romney-Ryan vision that continues to privilege the wealthiest few at the expense of hardworking, middle-class families. We will contrast that to President Obama's vision for an economy that works for all people and provides a secure and respectable quality of life for middle-class families.

In particular, we will highlight and contrast President Obama's record of investing in American jobs, rebuilding our communities and protecting secure retirements for our oldest Americans against the Romney-Ryan record of outsourcing and walking away from American industry, cutting important services to our communities and jeopardizing the retirements of our seniors.

We have created a website, [www.aflcio.org/meetromney](http://www.aflcio.org/meetromney), that highlights Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan's extreme agenda and focuses on:

1. **The Wrong Way to Get Rich:** Romney's record of laying off workers at Bain Capital and filing for bankruptcy.
2. **Helping the 1%:** Romney-Ryan's tax plan and how it will benefit the top 1% and corporations—not the middle class.
3. **Hurting the Rest of Us:** Romney-Ryan's attack plan to cut social programs like Social Security and Medicare, target teachers' unions and create anti-worker legislation.
4. **His Record Speaks Louder Than Words:** Romney's record as Massachusetts governor when the state had the highest debt per capita and ranked low (47th of 50 states) on job creation.

