Workers’ Wisdom, Workers’ Voice on Economic Inequality and Opportunity

A presentation to the
Ferguson Commission

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At the University of Missouri St Louis

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Land of Opportunity: a Turning Point

90% of this generation have less economic prosperity and security than the generation before them.
Loss of Working People’s Institutions, Power

As union membership decreases, middle class income shrinks
Greasing the Rungs of the Ladder: Mortgage Crisis

From the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, August 18, 2013

After raising her children in a modest four-bedroom Ferguson home, Barbara Bandy, 82, decided last year that climbing stairs had gotten the best of her. She placed her home for sale in May, 2012, and despite cutting the price three times, it still has not sold. Bandy, who has sold most of her furniture, was photographed on Wednesday, Aug. 14, 2013. Photo by Robert Cohen, rcohen@post-dispatch.com
Greasing the Rungs of the Ladder: Payday Lending
There are 872,000 student debtors in Missouri.

In Missouri, 63 percent graduated with debt averaging $24,957.

Student loans account 39 percent of non-mortgage debt, up from 22 percent in 2006.
Work Doesn’t Pay: Stagnant, Declining Wages

Source: Mother Jones Magazine Illustration of CBO Data on income by Quintile.
At least 1/3 of US workers are in contingent employment – more than 42 million.

And this doesn’t even count millions working undocumented or cash economy.
Work Doesn’t Pay – Growth of Low Wage Jobs

Low wage jobs are growing faster than the rest of the economy.

The top 4 growth occupations in St. Louis for next 8 years all earn less than $25,000 annually.

This Matters to All of Us

- Shrinking tax base
- Dropping consumer demand
- Strain on social institutions
- Social unrest
Making Jobs Better
Missouri Workers –
Our Solutions in a New Economy

Tipped employees
and the Missouri
Minimum Wage
Restaurants servers are the occupation with the third highest projected job growth in St Louis over the next 8 years.

Home Care Attendants and the Quality Homecare Council
Personal Care Attendants are the occupation with the second highest projected job growth in Missouri over the next 8 years.

Missouri Workers – Our Solutions in a New Economy

“Show Me 15” and the Fast Food Movement
Fast Food Workers are the occupation with the #1 highest projected job growth in St Louis and Missouri over the next 8 years.

TRUST OUR VOICES