

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Ken Martin, DNC Chair

DATE: February 18, 2025

RE: Democrats Will Fight Against Trump's War on Working People

When I talk about the state of the Democratic Party, I often speak about the impact of perceptions – what voters see, feel, and sense. I believe the canary in the coal mine for what happened on November 5 was the recent showing that, for the first time in modern history, Americans now see the Republicans as the party of the working class and Democrats as the party of the elites. I grew up in a working-class family, as the first son of a teen mom who had four kids by age 20, and I wouldn't be where I am today without Democrats who fought for policies to help families like mine not just get by, but get ahead. So, as the Trump agenda fails our nation's working communities, we have to take seriously the job of repairing and restoring the perceptions of our party and our brand. It's time to remind working Americans – and also show them every day – that the Democratic Party always has been and always will be the party of the worker.

My roots are in labor. I was the Chair of the Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party for fourteen years – the only party of its kind in the country that unites working people by name – where we went 25-0 in statewide races, secured two trifectas, and passed one of the most pro-family and pro-worker agendas in the nation. But before any of that, I proudly carried a union card and organized for the labor movement.

I fundamentally believe that our party is grounded in the values, principles, and aspirations of the working class. As Chair of the DNC, that belief will guide my decisions and approach in the years ahead. In contrast, in only his first month in office, it's become abundantly clear Donald Trump doesn't give a damn about the kitchen-table issues that matter to most Americans. Trump and the billionaire advisors he has surrounded himself with don't give a damn about what it takes for a working family to put food on the table and keep a roof above their heads – let alone make a better life for themselves and their loved ones.

When it comes to making real progress for working families, our greatest successes come when we unite together on the issue that connects us: economic opportunity. That's what union power is all about. It's about building a multi-generational, multi-racial coalition of every worker. As an organizer, I know, alone, no one person can take on the ultra-wealthy and the powerful. But by joining together in a union, working people have secured better wages, workplace protections, health care, and [the weekend](#). Because here's the thing: Unions expand opportunities for all workers – [not just those who are members](#).

At a time when Donald Trump and his billionaire backers are [carving up the federal government to sell for parts](#) and plotting to [offset tax breaks for their fat cat friends](#) by taking money out of Americans' pockets, we need union power more than ever. Trump knows it too. That's why he's wasted no time dismantling workers' [collective bargaining protections](#); elevating billionaires with records of offshoring, union busting, and workers' rights violations; and bringing his dangerous and unpopular Project 2025 agenda to life.

In response, as the true party of labor and working people, Democrats will stand *with* unions and *up* for all working people – in the halls of Congress, in state houses, on the picket lines, and in the streets. With Donald Trump and his Corrupt Billionaire Cabinet in office, the stakes have never been higher for working people – just take a look:

Attacking Labor From Day One

Americans sent Donald Trump to the White House to make life better for working families. Instead, beginning on day one, Trump moved with dizzying speed to dismantle the policies, protections, and institutions keeping workers safe, strong, and united.

In an unprecedented and [illegal](#) move, Trump fired appointees on two independent agencies – axing a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) member as well as [two](#) Democratic Equal Employment Opportunity Commission members, despite having appointed one of them during his first term.

These members brought [strong records](#) of standing up to giant corporations on behalf of working people and Trump knew he needed them out of the way to freely implement his anti-worker Project 2025 agenda. Following Trump's firing spree, the New York Times [reported](#) that Trump's removal of a member of the NLRB effectively "stops it from protecting workers' rights," making it far easier for corporate CEOs like [Amazon's Jeff Bezos](#) and [Elon Musk](#) – who got [front row seats](#) at Trump's inauguration – to trample over workers' protections as their companies face unionization efforts. In fact, both Amazon and Musk's SpaceX are currently [suing](#) the NLRB in an attempt to dismantle the board tasked with protecting workers from corporate exploitation.

Instead of pushing for progress on workers' rights, Donald Trump has rolled back the clock by some [sixty years](#): rescinding an executive order signed by President Lyndon Johnson to prohibit government contractors from discriminating in their hiring, firing, promotion, and pay practices. Union member or not, Trump and his allies' anti-worker, anti-union attacks within the public and private sector alike make workers less safe.

Elon Musk, the richest man in the world and Trump's [unpopular](#), unelected co-president, has shown the frightening realities of Donald Trump's anti-worker assaults. With Trump's blessing, Musk – who got zero votes in the 2024 election – has upended the federal government's merit-based career civil service and threatened retribution against government employees refusing to hand over U.S. taxpayers' personal information – from [home addresses](#), to [Medicare records](#), and [Social Security numbers](#).

Americans are disturbed by Elon Musk's influence over the federal government. We should all be asking: What does Musk want with our private data, will he sell it to the highest bidder, and how much money does he personally stand to make from the American taxpayer?

Since Elon Musk became the [true face](#) of the Trump administration, his public approval rating has [plummeted](#). After [infiltrating](#) the Treasury Department, [gutting](#) USAID, and attempting to [eliminate](#) the Department of Education, Elon Musk is also [setting his sights](#) on the Department of Labor, placing the integrity of data like the unemployment rate and inflation rate at risk. The accuracy of these metrics is critically important to the stability of the U.S. economy and, by extension, working people. In response, some of the nation's largest labor groups are standing up to Musk and Trump's highway robbery of the federal government, [suining](#) Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency.

In his second term, Donald Trump and his allies are more emboldened than ever to execute the far-right Project 2025 agenda, and Trump's attacks on workers fit within a long, troubling history. In his first term, Trump created new [incentives](#) for companies to [ship American jobs overseas](#) and [stacked](#) federal courts with appointees who attacked collective bargaining protections. He openly disparaged union workers as "[dues-sucking people](#)," said striking workers should be [fired](#), and balked at using union labor on his own [real estate projects](#). Despite his insistence on the campaign trail, Trump has never stood with working people. His disastrous first month in office proves that, while billionaires will be well taken care of, working people face great danger under this Trump administration.

Trump's Offshoring, Union Busting Advisors

To implement his dark Project 2025 vision and deliver handouts for the ultra-wealthy, Donald Trump is assembling the wealthiest U.S. Cabinet in American history, stacked with out-of-touch, special interest billionaires who are looking out for themselves and their balance sheets over working families.

Trump's administration includes [more billionaires](#) than any other in American history, with a combined net worth that [exceeds the GDP of 172 different countries](#). These appointees bring damning anti-union, anti-worker records that mirror Trump's own. Doug Burgum, now Trump's Interior Secretary, opposed historic federal investments secured in the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) and [CHIPS and Science Act](#) because of the bills' labor protections. Trump's billionaire pick for Commerce Secretary, Howard Lutnick, screwed over American workers by helping companies [ship manufacturing jobs](#) to Mexico. Stephen Miran, Trump's pick to lead the Council of Economic Advisors, [criticized](#) worker strikes and unions' ability to negotiate better wages for their members – a proven [pathway](#) to the middle class. Meanwhile, Trump and his [billionaire](#) Department of Education Secretary pick Linda McMahon have long [supported](#) pulling tax dollars away from public schools, where 70% of teachers are unionized. Such cuts to public school funding would harm both teachers and children.

And of course, Elon Musk, who stole Trump's spotlight to become the new face of the administration, boasts a damning record of union busting and other workers' rights violations. At Tesla, Elon Musk [fired](#) workers attempting to unionize and tried to hide [hundreds](#) of workplace injuries from public reports. He faces a [lawsuit](#) for threatening and intimidating his employees. Musk, who is now radically upending federal government operations, even forced his employees at X (formerly Twitter) to bring their own [toilet paper](#) to work. Despite the money saved on janitorial staff, Musk has still never managed to make X profitable. The app remains in ["dire state," with "no clear pathway to profitability in sight."](#)

Project 2025 v. Working Families

After spending his campaign [denying](#) his connection to Project 2025 while promising to bring down prices on [Day One](#), Donald Trump dropped the charade and immediately set out to make his ["severely unpopular"](#) Project 2025 agenda a reality as president.

Trump [elevated architects](#) of Project 2025 to lead his administration and [enacted](#) Project 2025 policies in an avalanche of executive orders – attacking [essential programs](#) and rescinding Biden-era [cost-saving measures](#) – all while laying the groundwork for another [tax handout to billionaires](#). In the short time Trump has been in office, Project 2025 is already causing chaos and pain for working Americans. Last month's disastrous federal aid freeze order was the ["brainchild"](#) of Trump's OMB director Russell Vought – Project 2025's chief architect. This freeze – and freezes of government funds since – have had disastrous impacts on Americans' daily lives. For example, Trump's freeze of President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act programs is ["creat\[ing\] chaos"](#) and causing significant ["financial distress"](#) to farmers and some Head Start programs across the country are still having trouble [accessing](#) federal funds thanks to Trump's freezes.

Project 2025 is designed to enrich the ultra-wealthy while dismantling the institutions that keep workers safe and allow them to earn their fair share. Project 2025 would make unionization incredibly [burdensome and precarious](#) for workers, further [dilute](#) the power of the NLRB, and [roll back](#) bedrock worker protections in place for [nearly a century](#).

If Trump continues to implement his Project 2025 agenda, workers who receive overtime would see their [paychecks slashed](#); the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, responsible for investigating workplace injuries and fatalities, would be [rendered toothless](#); construction workers would eat a decline in take home pay due to [attacks](#) on prevailing wage requirements; and companies could more easily intentionally [misclassify workers](#) as contractors to avoid providing them with benefits like health care and sick leave – and even exploit [child labor](#) without consequence.

Project 2025 also sets out to ban public-sector unions, a historically-monumental driver of economic mobility, especially for [marginalized workers](#). Today, thanks to strong collective bargaining agreements within the public sector, as well as early adoption of anti-discrimination provisions, the pay gap between Black workers and white workers is [smaller](#) in the public sector than in the private sector.

Unions protect workers regardless of identity, offer a pathway to the middle class, and raise standards for union and nonunion members alike. Trump's continued Project 2025 threats to unions are a direct attack on the wellbeing of working families everywhere.

Bottom Line

In his first term, Donald Trump relentlessly pursued policies that harmed working families, but his first month back in office proves he was just getting started. Trump and his billionaire backers are hellbent on attacking working families and dismantling the unions that protect workers in order to enrich themselves. As Democrats, it is our responsibility to stand up for working people and unite behind the kitchen table issues that connect us all. As I take over as Chair of the DNC, union workers and labor leaders will be core to my decision-making. As Trump wages his war on working families, Democrats will fiercely answer the call to my favorite old union song, "Which Side Are You On?" I'll tell you what: Democrats are on the side of the worker. We will show Americans every day that workers in fact do have more power than any billionaire.