

# ORGANIZE!

# SAFE JOBS NOW

**More than 50 years ago on April 28**, Workers Memorial Day, the Occupational Safety and Health Act went into effect, promising every worker the right to a safe job—a fundamental right. The law was won because of the tireless efforts of the labor movement, which organized for safer working conditions and demanded action from the government. Since then, unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality—winning protections that have made jobs safer and saved lives. But our work is not done. Each year, thousands of workers are killed and millions more suffer injury and illness because of dangerous working conditions that are preventable.

The COVID-19 pandemic devastated working families and highlighted the fundamental right to and importance of a safe job for every worker. Immediately and throughout this crisis, unions and our allies have stepped into action to demand and win protections on the job from this highly contagious virus. We organized for safe jobs and the right to speak out against unsafe working conditions. We won emergency safety protections for health care workers against COVID-19, and are continuing the fight for all. Without federal action to require prevention measures in all workplaces, unions demanded access to the ventilation, personal protective equipment and other measures that protect workers from inhaling the virus at work. The central involvement of organized labor and our allies was the key factor that improved working conditions to save lives.

But our work organizing for safe jobs has not ended. The pandemic exposed our weak laws that have prevented workers from organizing in their workplaces to demand safer working conditions. It also exposed weak job safety laws and a lack of resources that would ensure the

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) can protect workers. Many employers and workers never see OSHA in their workplace. Penalties are still too low to be a deterrent. Workers are not adequately protected to speak out against unsafe working conditions and to freely join a union without retaliation. As we look to the next 50 years of worker protections under OSHA and MSHA, we must demand Congress strengthen the agencies' authorities and provide them the resources necessary to ensure working people have safe jobs now. There must be action on critical safety and health protections against preventable hazards: infectious diseases, heat illness, workplace violence and silica in mining, and exposure to toxic chemicals that kills tens of thousands of workers each year.

Together, we are raising our collective voices to win stronger safety and health protections in our workplaces and stronger job safety and health laws. We are standing strong to hold workplace safety agencies accountable to create and enforce laws that protect workers, and to hold employers accountable to keep workers safe. We are organizing to raise the baseline level of safety protections for everyone, including those disproportionately impacted by dangerous working conditions.

On April 28, the unions of the AFL-CIO will observe Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job, and to organize the fight for safe jobs. We will come together this year to call for action on hazards that cause unnecessary injury, illness and death. We will stand united to strengthen workers' rights and protections, and demand resources and actions needed for job safety enforcement. We will fight for the fundamental right of every worker to a safe job until that promise is fulfilled.

**OBSERVE WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY ■ APRIL 28**

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**MOURN FOR  
THE DEAD**

**FIGHT FOR THE  
LIVING**

WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY • APRIL 28

## WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY APRIL 28, 2022

Decades of struggle by working people and our unions have improved working conditions and made jobs safer, but it has not been enough. This year we are coming together to strengthen our rights and protections to ensure everyone can come home safely at the end of a work shift—and without chronic illnesses from toxic exposures at work.

***As we grieve those we have lost from workplace hazards, including COVID-19, we must continue to push forward. We must:***

- Ensure all workers have the necessary protections from COVID-19 at work.
- Guarantee all workers have a safety voice on the job and the right to freely form a union without employer interference or intimidation.
- Pass the Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA) to provide OSHA protection to the millions of workers without it, stronger criminal and civil penalties for companies that violate job safety laws, and improved anti-retaliation protections.
- Increase efforts to protect the safety and health of Black, Latino and immigrant workers who are disproportionately affected by and especially targeted for speaking up against unsafe working conditions.
- Increase the job safety budgets and improve job safety enforcement.
- Win new protections on infectious diseases, workplace violence, silica exposure in mining, heat illness, exposure to asbestos and other toxic chemicals, and other hazards.
- Defend hard-won safety and health protections and workers' rights from attacks.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO ON WORKERS MEMORIAL DAY

***There are many ways to recognize Workers Memorial Day:***

- Organize an online campaign to call for stronger safety and health protections using our digital toolkit. Demand that elected officials put workers' well-being over corporate interests.
- Organize an outdoor, socially distanced event at your workplace to stand together to protect the fundamental right to a safe job for every worker and hold your employer accountable for keeping you safe.
- Hold a candlelight vigil, memorial service or moment of silence to remember those who have died on the job, and highlight job safety problems in your community.
- Host an event with members of Congress in their districts. Involve injured workers and family members who can talk firsthand about the need for strong safety and health protections, the ability to speak up against unsafe working conditions, and joining together in union to keep workplaces safe. Invite local religious and community leaders and other allies to participate in the event.
- Conduct workshops to train and empower workers to report job safety hazards and exercise workplace rights. Invite union members, nonunion workers and community allies to participate.
- Create a new memorial site at a workplace or in a community where workers have been killed on the job.
- Create and share an online photo and storyboard campaign on social media to remember workers who have been killed on the job.
- Invite the press to your Workers Memorial Day events to increase public awareness of the dangers working people face on the job.
- Continue to hold our leaders and employers accountable to provide safe working conditions. As a labor movement, we Mourn for the Dead and Fight for the Living on April 28, and every day of the year.

FOR ADDITIONAL  
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