

**President's Perspective**  
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**Remember the last Paul Ryan budget?**

Last year our retirement system was threatened when Representative Paul Ryan (R-WI) inserted language in the federal budget that would have devastated our retirement benefits. The *Ryan Budget*, mostly pulled from thin air, or some other likely place, included a provision that would have conformed Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefits to Social Security benefits. Never mind that not one single penny of public funds or tax revenue goes to support our Tier 1 benefits. Fortunately, all of rail labor rallied around the issue and with the help of our Teamster brothers and sisters, the provision was removed from the budget.

He is back again, even though last November American voters overwhelmingly rejected his budget plan when they soundly rejected the Romney/Ryan ticket. Apparently, he either didn't get the message, or he thinks we all have short-term memories. He is back with the same old ideas, and while his new budget doesn't contain the language concerning Railroad Retirement, it does still target Social Security - something many of our relatives and friends have paid into, and rely on in their senior years. Yet, he still protects tax breaks for the wealthy, while dismissing American workers, particularly poor children and the elderly.

Ryan's latest mythical budget again targets the poor and middle-class and rewards the rich. He claims that programs like Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid have to be cut, and makes the same old tired argument that more breaks for corporations will trickle down and create jobs. Corporations have had more tax breaks than can be counted and they are sitting on massive reserves of cash, so where are the jobs?

Jobs are an investments in America. Money spent on transportation through the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* created thousands of jobs and improved our transportation network. But, there is absolutely no proof that the billions in tax breaks for millionaires have created one single job or improved anything other than the bank accounts of a privileged few. One thing is for sure, not one job will be created by debating a budget that has absolutely no basis in reality. The only hope for creating more jobs and protecting our livelihoods is to rid ourselves of these obstructionist politicians who are continuing to block good jobs bills and investment in America, and are attacking those who still have jobs.

Not only are they blocking sensible jobs bills, there are factions that would eliminate any type of worker protection and send us back to the time when there was no voice for working men and women.

Extreme anti-worker types like Ryan didn't get the message in the last election and are continuing to attack anything to do with worker's rights. Ryan types have been systematically attacking Labor, targeting everything from public employee pension plans and health care reform, while championing right-to-work schemes to weaken organized Labor. And, never mind

their attitude toward the poor and minorities, where they are attempting to eliminate basic rights, like the right to vote, or the right to a public education. Ryan and his party have a record of opposing a fair minimum wage, equal pay for women, and even aid to Hurricane Sandy victims. It is almost like the inmates are running the asylum.

The point here is that those who would destroy our right to a decent wage and a comfortable life for our children haven't gone anywhere. They are still there at the national, state and local levels, attacking our right to exist and stifling any hope for a better economy.

We have to be ever vigilant or risk losing those benefits our Union has gained over the past 125 years. Everything our forefathers earned through their blood, sweat and tears could evaporate in almost an instant. At the state level, right-to-work-laws, voting-rights-laws, and even pension plans have been eliminated almost overnight in some instances. And, they want to continue attacking Labor.

Not only do they want to destroy workers' right to organize and bargain for a better life, they want to make sure you can't elect anyone that doesn't agree with their philosophy. Sadly, they are achieving this by gerrymandering districts to the advantage of one political party, and by ignoring portions of the *Voting Rights Act* and making it all but impossible in some states for the elderly, minorities and the poor to vote.

We should all pay close attention to what our politicians are doing, not what they say or how they act, but how they vote on bills that affect working families. And, when the time comes to vote, remember who your friends are and vote accordingly.

