

## President's 2010 Workers' Memorial Day Message

On Wednesday, April 28, workers and their unions throughout the world will pause to remember the thousands of workers killed and injured in the workplace over the past year. I ask each of you to take time this Workers' Memorial Day to remember and honor our fallen Brothers and Sisters.

Each year in the U.S., approximately 6,000 workers are killed at work, 50,000 die from occupational illnesses, and millions more are injured. During calendar year 2009, 16 U.S. railroad workers were killed on duty, including 4 fatalities in maintenance of way and structures. Another 4,295 rail workers suffered reportable injuries, including 941 employed in maintenance of way and structures. These railroad employee fatalities and injuries do not include an undetermined number of rail employees who suffer or have succumbed to railroad-related occupational illnesses and disease during 2009.

Unfortunately, these tragic statistics do not tell the full story. Studies show that underreporting or non-reporting of injuries and illnesses is rampant with as many as two out of every three workplace injuries not recorded.

We will honor the victims of workplace death and injury by holding employers accountable for the protection of workers' safety and health. We call for action on meaningful job safety protection laws and demand aggressive enforcement of existing laws. We affirm that nothing is more important than assuring a workplace free of hazards so that our members can return safely home from work in the same condition as when they left.

Please join me in honoring our dead by pausing to remember their ultimate sacrifice this Workers' Memorial Day. Then, let us redouble our efforts to eliminate death and injury in the railroad workplace. In the words of labor pioneer Mother Jones, "Mourn for the dead, and fight like hell for the living."

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