

BUREAU OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIES (BOLI)
COMMISSIONER BRAD AVAKIAN

Commissioner's Message – September 5, 2011
A Special Labor Day Message from the Labor Commissioner

Dear Friends:

As we celebrate Labor Day again, my fourth as Oregon Labor Commissioner, I wanted to share a few thoughts with you about the American worker, who has built the most prosperous nation in history.

With our economy still rocky and organized labor being unreasonably blamed for government deficits, this is without a doubt a tough time to be an American worker. We need to create jobs, both in emerging and traditional industries, that pay a living wage. Investing in our workforce is the key to running our economic engine at full speed--let's remember that even in this rough patch, American workers are still producing approximately \$15 trillion in goods and services each year, or about \$48,000 in production per capita.

That productivity didn't just magically come into being. For more than 200 years, through difficult working conditions and poor wages, all stripes of American worker have contributed hours beyond calculation, plus sweat, tears and even blood, to building a country and an economy that is the envy of the world. Every day, millions of Americans add their contributions to our mutual success—often with no recognition save that small but much appreciated paycheck.

Last year at this time, I [talked about](#) Oregon's leadership and the strength of our working people. Really, our entire country is well-represented by the dedication of our working people, and my unshakeable faith in the American worker has always been rewarded.

Believing in America's workers really isn't that hard. It can seem difficult when the economy is rough and we aren't living up to our potential. But especially on Labor Day, when we reflect on the contributions that our forebears have made to our country and our economy, I have no doubt of the success that is on our horizon.

We still have to work to get there, keep making each of our small contributions every day, but the generations that did the heavy lifting in establishing the world's pre-eminent economy weren't building a house of cards. The American economy has been built, steadily and soundly, on a level and of a quality that cannot be undermined by transitory circumstances. The American economy is and will continue to be the most powerful engine in history.

Let's celebrate our predecessors, in all of the jobs throughout America, each of them valuable, on this Labor Day. And then let's put a little gas in the tank, rev our economic engine, and get back to work.

Sincerely,



Brad Avakian
Oregon Labor Commissioner