

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS:

## Where's Our Recovery?

For four years now California and the rest of the nation have officially been in an economic recovery after the recession of 2001. Gross Domestic Product (GDP)—the key measure of recession and recovery—has posted strong growth since 2001. And profits have grown even faster than GDP.

But do these measures adequately capture the economic experiences faced by California's workers these days? Even if the economy has "officially" recovered, is that the end of the story? A recent analysis by Labor Center researcher Arindrajit Dube illustrates why other measures must be considered before we can put the stamp of health on our state's economy.

Dube's report, "Are We Recovering Yet? Jobs and Wages in California over the 2000–2005 Period," is the second installment of an annual overview of employment, wages and the composition of jobs in California and the United States. Last year Dube reported that job quality was actually worsening, with falling wages and tepid job growth—this despite the fact that the economy was "in recovery." This year things are better, but only marginally so.

### More Jobs?

Periods of economic recovery have typically been accompanied by strong reductions in unemployment and subsequent wage increases. Not this time. As Dube states, "Whereas in the past we've seen 'jobless recoveries,' this time we're seeing a recovery that actually included a period of job loss." Over the past year, job growth has finally picked up, but a jobs-deficit remains. Two percent fewer working-age Californians are working today, as compared to prior to the recession.

### How about Better Wages?

Though job growth in the current recovery is at last increasing, the labor market nonetheless remains weak overall, and therefore significant wage increases would be unlikely. But wages are actually even worse than would be expected given the slack labor market. Adjusted (Continued on page 11)

### New Union Leadership School for African American Unionists

In January 2006 the Labor Center will undertake a major new initiative: the

C. L. Dellums African American Union Leadership School. The aim of the school is to develop the leadership skills of Black trade unionists, so they can strengthen the labor movement and promote the

C. L. DELLUMS

interests of African American workers within their unions and their communities.

The school will serve both elected union officers and local member leaders from the Bay Area. It will be conducted over the course of eight Saturdays, and will include three follow-up sessions to assist participants in applying their new skills and knowledge.

"One of the pressing needs of labor is to develop a set of leaders who are both representative of the membership of unions and skilled at engaging members in their union. This leadership school will help fill this void," said Lead Instructor Steven Pitts.

The school is named in honor of the labor and civil rights activist C. L. Dellums, who helped found the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, served as president of the West Coast chapter, and, eventually, as the national president. Dellums also was a leader of the NAACP and was the first Black head of the California Fair Employment Practices Commission.

Photo of C. L. Dellums courtesy of the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO).



The economic recovery in California has relied heavily on the construction and real estate industries—a cause for concern now that the red-hot housing market may finally be cooling. (Photo courtesy of the Northern California Carpenters Regional Council.)

## Wal-Mart, China and Labor

“Wal-Mart is the 20th largest retailer in China,” said Beihang University economics professor Gao Yuanyang, “but it is influencing the rest of the retail sector through a combination of EDLP (everyday low prices) and intensive supply chain management and logistics.” Thus began a remarkable day of Labor Center-sponsored roundtable discussions among academics and labor leaders to examine the impact of Wal-Mart on the Chinese and U.S. economies, labor responses to those impacts, and future strategies for development and cooperation.



**KATIE QUAN**  
Labor Center Chair

Jia Yanmin, a former rank and file textile worker and now chairperson of the Finance and Commerce, Light Industry, Textile, Tobacco Union of China, acknowledged that Chinese unions must do more to organize workers at Wal-Mart and other places, otherwise they will become irrelevant. She cited examples of new forms of organizing in the sector that she represents, like community-based organizing of workers in small firms on the same street.

Labor Center staff Ken Jacobs, Arin Dube and I presented research from the American side. The discussion ratcheted up substantially when Professor She Yunxia of the China Institute of Industrial Relations asked Arin about a statistic in his presentation that did not match his writings. Arin explained the difference easily, but not before there was audible murmuring among the American participants about how sharp and well-prepared the Chinese guests were. However, when I asked if the Chinese government would tolerate Chinese non-governmental organizations (NGOs) waging campaigns against foreign investors like Wal-Mart, it became apparent that the Chinese representatives were unfamiliar with the existence of the more than 30 labor NGOs in China. (For more on non-traditional forms of Chinese worker organizing, see my article on Xi'an domestic workers organizing on page 4).

In the last roundtable, Josie Mooney, SEIU leader and official host for the Chinese delegation, drove the point home. “Wal-Mart is just entering the Chinese retail market, and now is the best time to organize them,” she said to the Chinese unionists, “and we want to work with you. We can’t win the fight against Wal-Mart without you.” This strategic frame and

establishment of urgent priority set the tone for numerous ideas for future cooperation.

Roundtables like this one are an important step in bridging the enormous gap in understanding that exists between U.S. and Chinese labor activists and scholars. Perhaps the foundation of the bridge was established when delegation leader Jia Yanmin revealed a part of her own history. She was a textile worker for 18 years. She told us how she was elected by her peers to be a local union leader and eventually rose through the ranks to her current position as chairperson of her union. Everyone around the table developed a profound respect for her passion, motivation and leadership. She might be an official spokesperson, but she was also “real people.”

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Regular readers of our newsletter know that for the past two years the governor and his conservative allies have targeted UC labor studies for elimination in the State budget. This past July, in a blatant anti-labor move, the governor line-item vetoed our \$3.8 million budget, even though the overall UC budget went up. In the fall, university administrators informed us that UC would allocate \$800,000 to the Berkeley Institute of Industrial Relations (the parent unit of the Labor Center), and \$450,000 to the UCLA Institute of Industrial Relations. The bottom line is that this year our Labor Center’s budget has been cut by \$280,000.

In spite of these mean-spirited attacks on labor and labor studies, we are committed to finding ways to keep our very talented staff employed at the Berkeley Labor Center, and we are resolved to continue to provide top-quality education and research that is important to labor. To those ends, we will have to cut back some spending on programs and administration, while at the same time aggressively raising funds from various sources. Watch for notices from us about a variety of fundraising events that will take place in the spring. We hope that we can continue to count on your support!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Quan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

## Forum on Immigration Reform

This past summer the Labor Center collaborated with numerous Bay Area community-based organizations and unions to bring Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX) to Oakland for a "Community Dialogue on Immigration Reform." More than 100 participants discussed with Jackson Lee her view that immigration reform should be the "new civil rights issue of the 21st century." While immigration policy must address security and border issues, Jackson Lee declared that "it's also [about] securing America's jobs. . . . It must be broader than just guest worker programs and securing the borders." The author of HR 2092, the "Save America Comprehensive Immigration Act of 2005," Jackson Lee outlined her broad approach to reform, stating that fair and effective immigration policy must address and incorporate legalization, pathways to citizenship, family reunification, an end to employer sanctions and immigration raids, and workplace and civil rights for everyone.

The Community Dialogue on Immigration Reform was broadcast live on KPFA's Youth Radio program on July 16, 2005. To listen, go to [www.kpfa.org/archives/](http://www.kpfa.org/archives/) then jump to the date of the dialogue, and then link to the "Youth Radio" program.



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas (above) visited Oakland to discuss her immigration reform proposal. (Photos courtesy of the Bay Area Immigrant Rights Coalition.)

## New Central Valley Initiative

In early November the Labor Center co-sponsored a three-day symposium on the Central Valley at the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law. Entitled "The New Face of California: The Great Central Valley," the symposium brought together 90+ academics and activists from California's Central Valley and UC Berkeley to examine the demographic, political, social, and economic changes taking place in the Central Valley. Participants also explored possible solutions to the key issues faced by residents. The symposium was organized by the Center for Social Justice at the law school and was the inaugural event of the Central Valley Initiative, which brings together activists, academics, lawyers, and others to collaborate on research, policy, and advocacy agendas that promote social justice in the Valley. The Initiative will culminate in a conference at UC Merced. For more information please visit [www.law.berkeley.edu/centralvalleyinitiative](http://www.law.berkeley.edu/centralvalleyinitiative).

Service to Central Valley workers is a growing component of the Labor Center's overall program. Participants in last year's California Union Leadership School were from the Central Valley exclusively; in April 2006 we will conduct our Strategic Campaigns Workshop in a Central Valley location; and next fall we will inaugurate a new Latino Leadership School that will serve Central Valley worker organizers.



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As part of the Central Valley Initiative, the Center for Social Justice at the UC Berkeley Boalt Hall School of Law hosted "Dream What We Can Become and Rejoice," a multimedia, bilingual exhibit of the farm worker's experience, by George Elfie Ballis and Maia Ballis. Contact the artists at 559-855-3710 or [mail@sunmt.org](mailto:mail@sunmt.org) to schedule a tour of the exhibit, or for more information.

FRONTIERS IN GLOBAL ORGANIZING:

## Xi'an Domestic Workers Organize

BY KATIE QUAN

Since China embarked on its transition to a market economy nearly two decades ago, millions of workers have been laid off from state-owned enterprises that were unprofitable. These workers were often left with few prospects of new employment and many did not have any kind of social benefits. Some workers have found employment in the informal service sector, like the women domestic workers in Xi'an, the city known for terra cotta soldiers at the tomb of China's first emperor.

"Most of us didn't have many options," recalls Wang Weiya. "We were in our 40s and 50s—too old to work fast, 80 percent of us were single mothers, and we didn't have any education or skills that would help us get a good job." One of the few options for Wang and her co-workers was to do domestic work—cleaning houses, cooking, taking care of children and grandparents, and shopping for food. Their work was exhausting and frustrating. They were paid a monthly salary of only 450 RMB, which is less than the minimum wage for contract laborers of 490 RMB, and were subject to unfair demands, scolding, and even sexual harassment from their employers.

"Their status is not recognized, so they are not covered by labor law," explains Li Yali of the Center for Women's Development and Rights of Northwest Polytechnical University (CWDR). "They are not entitled to be covered by an employment contract, but instead have civil contracts that make them similar to independent contractors. This benefits the employers who do not have to abide by labor regula-

tions." Li went on to explain that legal scholars are now calling for labor law reform to include coverage for informal sector workers such as domestic workers.

In 2002, a group of women's rights activists decided to address

the domestic workers' situation through education. Based at Xi'an's Northwest Polytechnic University and headed by professor Guo Huimin, the CWDR staff contacted domestic workers at their hiring agencies and offered classes to them. "We talked about their issues, difficulties, and feelings," recalls Li Yali. "Some of them cried. They had demands, but they were not organized and they did not have channels to people in power." From the workers' point of view, the classes were exciting and empowering. Even in horrendous thunderstorms dozens of workers still came to class. Recalls Wang Weiya, "Talking collectively about our problems made us feel stronger. That's why we decided to form a union. The peasants in a nearby rural area had just formed a union, and we figured if they can do it, so can we."

With the help of CWDR, the workers got assistance from two other key partners, the local All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), an organization affiliated with the Chinese government but also somewhat independent, and the Xi'an chapter of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). They affiliated with the ACFTU, and received a medical card that entitles them to union medical benefits.

Unionization has changed the lives of the Xi'an domestic workers. Union vice-president Jia Lijie explains, "We don't have the right to bargain collectively, but we teach our members how to bargain as individuals with their employers. If they can't reach agreement over a dispute, then we send our grievance team out to help the individual member. Usually we get a fair settlement." Wages have gone up for the domestic workers, too. The union established a wage scale based upon skill level, so that *(Continued on page 10)*



## Staff Transitions

The Labor Center is pleased to welcome three new staff members:

### Veronica Carrizales

Veronica joins the Labor Center as our newest Labor Specialist. Her projects include heading up the Labor Summer program, participating in the California Lead Organizers Institute, and planning a new Latino Leadership School. Prior to joining the Labor Center, Veronica served as Project Director at Enlace, where she participated in the Sara Lee and Pung Kook cross border campaigns. She also worked on living wage and other campaigns at the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy. She did her undergraduate studies at UCLA in American Literature and Chicano Studies.



### Alicia Criado

The Labor Center welcomes Alicia to the new position of Program Assistant. Alicia is a recent graduate of the UC Berkeley Peace and Conflict Studies program, and is also an alumna of the Labor Summer Internship Program, during which she interned with SEIU Local 790. At the Labor Center, she helps plan, implement, and conduct our leadership schools and workshops.

### Kathy Yoo

Kathy is our new Business Operations Manager, and is responsible for the financial oversight of the Labor Center, as well as aspects of facilities management, contracts and grants, and human resources. Before joining the Labor Center, Kathy worked at the UC Office of the President. She has an undergraduate degree in Business from UC Berkeley, and a Master's Degree in Women's Studies from San Francisco State University.



We also announce with regret that three of our co-workers have moved on to new opportunities:

### Lea Grundy

A four-year veteran of the Labor Center, Lea served as the lead of our education team, bringing her skills, energy and good cheer to projects too numerous to mention. She was wooed away by the SEIU California State Council this past summer, where she now serves as the Northern California Political Field Coordinator. She successfully completed a major trial by fire in her new position this past November 8.

### John Momper

For the past four years, John served as the Labor Center's Business Operations Manager, adroitly handling a period of rapid growth as well as periods of funding cuts. John now works as the Business Manager of the California Social Work Education Center, administering \$25 million in annual federal funding subcontracts.

### Yujing Cheng

Yujing ably provided administrative assistance to the Labor Center over the past year. He has moved on to a new position in the private sector as an IT System Technician, where he will be responsible for supporting 40+ networked computers and their users.

## The UC Berkeley Labor Center

KATIE QUAN, *Chair*

CAROL ZABIN, *Associate Chair*

KEN JACOBS, *Deputy Chair*

VERONICA CARRIZALES, *Labor Specialist*

ARINDRAJIT DUBE, *Professional Researcher*

STEVEN PITTS, *Labor Specialist*

RAAHI REDDY, *Labor Specialist*

STEVE WERTHEIM, *Research Associate*

ALICIA CRIADO, *Program Assistant*

SARAH LAWTON, *Acting Development Coordinator*

JENIFER MACGILLVARY, *Communications Coordinator*

KATHY YOO, *Business Operations Manager*

ANAHITA FORATI, *Project Coordinator*

ELIZABETH DEL ROCÍO CAMACHO, *Web Administrator*

DION ARONER, *Legislator-in-Residence*

TOM RANKIN, *Labor Leader-in-Residence*

KIRKE WILSON, *Philanthropist-in-Residence*

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# Labor Center Research

## Labor Day Press Briefing

The Labor Center held its second (and henceforth annual) Labor Day Press Briefing on August 31, providing Bay Area journalists with new research to inform their Labor Day news coverage and economic analyses. Two reports were released at the briefing: Arindrajit Dube's "Are We Recovering Yet? Jobs and Wages in California over the 2000–2005 Period," which provides an overview of employment, wages and the composition of jobs in California and the United States (see article, page 1), and "Black Workers in the Bay Area: 1970–2000: A Data Brief," by Steven Pitts and Steve Wertheim. Previous research conducted by Pitts concluded that analyses of work in the Black community must examine the crisis of *bad jobs*, not just the already well-documented crisis of unemployment. His current research, funded by the Akonadi Foundation, does just that, and has found worrisome patterns. For instance, the percentage of young Bay Area Black workers holding low-wage jobs grew from 40.2 in 1970 to 63.6 in 2000. As Pitts says, "In the popular media, the unemployment crisis is captured by scenes of approximately 11,000 applicants—largely black and Latino—lining

## Congratulations, Carol!

Carol Zabin, Labor Center Associate Chair and Director of Research, has been awarded the Susan C. Eaton Scholar-Practitioner Project Award from the Labor and Employment Relations Research Association. This year's prize was for scholarly research in labor and employment. Carol's winning research project will document unionization efforts in the home- and community-based "care industries" of health, education and human services.



up for 4,000 vacancies at an Oakland Wal-Mart.... But we should also deal with the reality that too many African Americans work at jobs that do not provide wages and benefits to properly raise a family." The report can be downloaded from our website.

Coverage of our Labor Day Press Briefing and these reports was included in *Business Week*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, *The Oakland Tribune*, *San Mateo County Times*, *Contra Costa Times*, *KGO-TV*, *Marin Independent Journal*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *Stockton Record*, and *NBC11*.

## Kids At Risk

With Working Partnerships USA, the Labor Center recently issued a report documenting some troubling trends in health insurance for California's children. Entitled "Kids At Risk: Declining Employer-Based Health Coverage in California and the United States: A Crisis for Working Families," the researchers found that, without immediate action, by 2010 fewer than half of California's children will be insured through a parent's employer. What lies ahead is a significant shift of health care costs from employers to working families and the public sector.

This report was produced with funding from The California Endowment. It can be downloaded from our website.

## New Labor Center Grants and Contracts

**Job Quality and Occupational Change Among African Americans in the Bay Area: 1970–2000.** Research project and dissemination conference funded by Akonadi Foundation.

**Documenting the Effects of the Phase-Out of the Multi-Fiber Agreement.** Research funded by the University of California Labor and Employment Research Fund.

**The Dynamics of Job Quality Transformation: Health Benefits in the Unionized Grocery Sector in California.** Research funded by the University of California Labor and Employment Research Fund.

**Research on Transformations in Retail Work.** Funded by American Rights at Work.

**Labor Market Impact of Wal-Mart Growth.** Research funded by General Service Foundation.

**Workforce Issues in Services for People with Developmental Disabilities.** Research funds provided by Service Employees International Union.

# Coming Events

## Leadership Schools

### C. L. Dellums African American Union Leadership School

The aim of the Labor Center's newest leadership school is to develop the leadership skills of Bay Area Black trade unionists—both elected union officers and local member leaders (please see article on page 1). *Eight Saturday sessions beginning January 28 and ending May 6, 2006. Place tba (in Berkeley). For information or to apply, contact Steven Pitts at 510-643-6815 or spitts1@berkeley.edu, or visit our website.*

### California Lead Organizers Institute

A five-day training with two follow-up sessions, specifically designed for lead organizers. The 2006 Institute is intended for organizers who work with the Latino community on Latino healthcare issues, and will be conducted in Spanish and English.

The deadline for applications is February 10, 2006. *Monday–Friday, March 13–17, 2006. Held at the Ben Lomond Center near Santa Cruz. For information or to apply, contact Alicia Criado at acriado@berkeley.edu or 510-642-9316, or visit our website.*

### Labor Summer

This program places UC undergraduate and graduate students into paid summer internships with Bay Area unions and community-based worker organizations. Union/CBO applications to host an intern are due February 3, 2006; internship applications are due March 3, 2006. *For information or to apply, contact Alicia Criado at acriado@berkeley.edu or 510-642-9316, or visit our website.*

## CORE Trainings

### Media Skills Workshop

A two-day workshop for union leaders and staff featuring lessons for creating an effective strategic media plan for a campaign, and developing and delivering your message to the media. Highlights of the training include a panel discussion with Bay Area print, radio and TV journalists, and on-camera practice sessions. *Come to one or both sessions. Thursday, January 19 & Friday, January 20, 2006. Held at the Institute of Industrial Relations, 2521 Channing Way, Berkeley. For information or to register, contact Alicia Criado at acriado@berkeley.edu or 510-642-9316, or visit our website.*

### Strategic Campaigns Workshop

Organizers enter with a problem and emerge with workable draft plans to: set up worker communication systems; identify clear campaign goals and objectives; develop strategy, tactics, and a timeline for the campaign. *This training will be held in the Central Valley in*

*April, 2006; exact location and date tba. For information, contact Alicia Criado at acriado@berkeley.edu or 510-642-9316, or visit our website.*

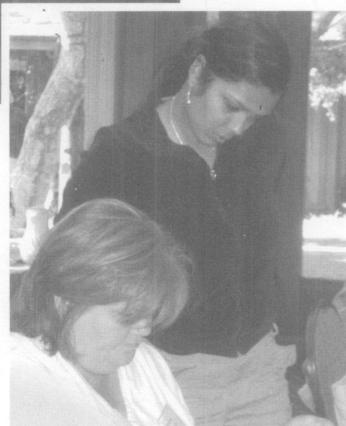
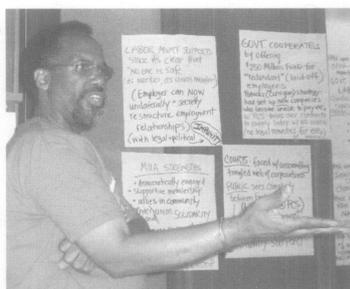
## Conferences

### Conference on Job Quality and Occupational Change Among African Americans in the Bay Area: 1970–2000

A one-day conference to present and discuss ongoing research being conducted at

the Labor Center on the development of the Bay Area African American workforce since 1970. *May, 2006 (exact date tba), in the Berkeley area (exact location tba). For information, contact Steven Pitts at 510-643-6815 or spitts1@berkeley.edu.*

*For more information and updates on upcoming events, please visit our website at <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu>.*

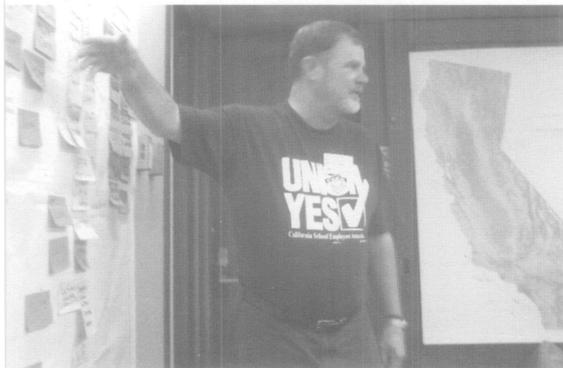


## Labor Education News

### California Union Leadership School

On June 10, the Labor Center wrapped up the third round of the California Union Leadership School (CULS), its annual week-long training program for union leaders seeking to hone their skills in order to more effectively confront labor's new challenges.

This year's participants were all from the Central Valley, and the school focused on the special issues facing workers in this part of the state. Participants walked



away with new contacts and connections, along with a renewed sense of common

purpose in the Central Valley's labor movement. Tim Liermann of California School Employees Association (CSEA) stated that no matter what happened at the AFL-CIO convention, "in our region we are going to work together." Gregg Jordan of IBEW Local 100 said that "CULS restored my

### Another Successful Labor Summer

This past summer marked the fourth year of the Labor Center's successful Labor Summer internship program. The program places UC graduate and

**"I've created so many connections that I can use immediately. It is definitely a step in the door of the labor movement."**

—Helen Sun, 2005 Labor Summer intern

undergraduate students into paid internships with unions and community-based worker organizations for a summer of intensive training, research, and real-world learning.

Over its four-year history, the Labor Summer program has racked up an impressive record. It has trained and placed 128 interns, fully 67 percent of whom were women and 64 percent of whom were people of color. The program's retention rate—the percentage of interns that continue to work in the labor movement—is 34 percent! This is an exceptionally high retention rate and speaks to the quality of the program, not to mention the satisfaction of working in the labor movement. The value of the program is illustrated by the frequency with which unions hire on interns once the program ends. For instance, in 2005:

- An intern was hired by SEIU 817 to work as political coordinator.
- An intern was hired by the East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy as a part-time researcher.
- Interns with both the La Raza Centro Legal Day Labor Program and UNITE HERE Local 2 will continue as volunteers until they graduate.
- Two interns went on to work for SEIU in Chicago and UNITE HERE in Las Vegas as researchers.

**"I wouldn't trade what I've learned for a whole month of vacation."**

—James Hackett, SEIU 535, CULS 2005 participant

faith in the labor movement." Participants were engaged to work on a project of common concern over the next year, further strengthening their newly forged bonds.

CULS 2006 will be held in Los Angeles. For information, please contact Steven Pitts at 510-643-6815 or [spitts1@berkeley.edu](mailto:spitts1@berkeley.edu).

2005 California Union Leadership School participants (clockwise from top): Tim Liermann of CSEA, Angelo Aevalos of Laborers 220, and Gloria Cantu of SEIU 535. (Photos by Sarah Lawton.)

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Applications to host an intern in 2006 are due February 3; internship applications are due March 3. For information, please contact Alicia Criado at [acriado@berkeley.edu](mailto:acriado@berkeley.edu) or 510-642-9316.



**Labor Summer interns join other Labor Center supporters at the UC Regents meeting in July.**

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## Updates from Bay Area Labor Education Programs

### **City College of San Francisco Labor and Community Studies—by Bill Shields, Chair**

Labor and Community Studies continues to fire on all cylinders. In response to the needs of today's busy union and workers' rights activists, we've developed a series of short classes that can be delivered on-site in English, Spanish and Cantonese. Examples include a recent workers' rights class taught by faculty member Joannie Chang for SEIU 790 shop stewards, as well as her immigrant workers' rights class for Chinese Progressive Association members in Chinatown. Pam Tau Lee's health and safety classes continue to reach students in the Asian Carpenters program affiliated with Carpenters Local 22. These classes now lead to short-term certificates that, in turn, feed into our newly restructured major, and transfer to sister programs at four-year institutions.

Our new "Latino Worker in the Americas" class will be offered in Spring 2006, along with "California Labor History" and "Organizing for Social and Economic Justice."

We celebrated the hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World in October with speakers, a film and music by Faith

Petric and the Rockn' Solidarity Chorus. We're planning a similar event with the Rebuilding San Francisco committee to celebrate the workers who rebuilt the city after the earthquake and fire of 1906.

For information about events or classes, please write Bill Shields at [wshields@ccsf.edu](mailto:wshields@ccsf.edu). Se puede? Si, se puede!

### **Laney College Labor Studies—by Karin Hart, Chair**

As we prepare for next semester's classes (which begin on January 12), we take a moment to celebrate some of our recent successes. This fall we had energetic students in our usual classes such as Grievance Handling, Labor Law, Organizing and Labor History. On three Saturdays in October, 20 students participated in a joint training with UC Berkeley's Labor Occupational Health Program on the new Worker Occupational Safety & Health (WOSH) Specialist training, which develops the skills that front-line workers need to take on leadership roles promoting workplace health and safety. Our next WOSH training will be in the Fall 2006 semester.

In late Spring and Fall 2006, Laney will host various activities as part of the 60th anniversary of the 1946 Oakland General Strike. We will be updating our walking tour map of important strike sites in the Labor Research Strategies class on Wednesday evenings this Spring semester.

Finally, we invite you to visit our new Labor Studies web page, which you can find by going to [http://laney.peralta.edu/Karin\\_Hart](http://laney.peralta.edu/Karin_Hart) and clicking on the words "Labor Studies Program" on the right edge of the page. Bookmark it as a place to keep up-to-date on the Laney program and on the labor movement in the East Bay. Take a moment and tell us what you think of it by clicking on the feedback button at the bottom of the page.

For more information about the Laney College Labor Studies Program contact coordinator Karin Hart at [khart@peralta.edu](mailto:khart@peralta.edu) or 510-464-3210.



## Falling Apart: Declining Job-Based Health Coverage for Working Families in California and the United States

By Arindrajit Dube and Ken Jacobs (Labor Center), and Sarah Muller, Bob Brownstein and Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins (Working Partnerships USA)

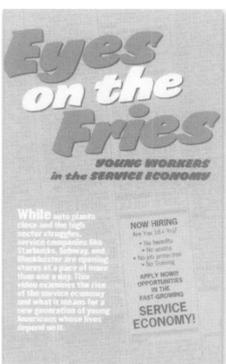
If nothing is done to stem the decline in job-based health coverage, only a bare majority of Californians under 65 will have coverage through an employer by the end of the decade. This study analyzes trends in health insurance coverage in the U.S. and California, examines the causes of the changes, and predicts the coverage rates over the next five years under different rates of premium cost increases.



## Kids at Risk: Declining Employer-Based Health Coverage in California and the United States

By Arindrajit Dube and Ken Jacobs (Labor Center), and Sarah Muller, Bob Brownstein and Phaedra Ellis-Lamkins (Working Partnerships USA)

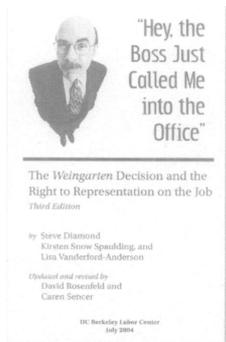
This report documents troubling trends in the provision of health insurance for children in California and nationally. (A more full description of this report is on page 6.)



## Eyes on the Fries: Young Workers in the Service Economy

A film by Casey Peek and Jeremy Blasi

This half-hour documentary is the perfect primer to engage young people about their experiences in the workplace—and how they can take action to make their jobs better. Designed for educational use in classrooms and union halls, the film comes with an interactive curriculum kit, including workshops, fact sheets, and discussion questions.



## “Hey, the Boss Just Called Me into the Office”: The Weingarten Decision and the Right to Representation on the Job

By Steve Diamond, Kirsten Snow Spalding, and Lisa M. Vanderford-Anderson. Updated and revised by David Rosenfeld and Caren Sencer

Updated in 2004 to reflect recent changes in the law on the right to representation at work. A must-have resource for any union member.

For information on ordering these and other materials, please visit our website at <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu>.

## Xi'an Domestic Workers (Continued from page 4)

a well-trained domestic worker like Jia Lijie, who knows how to bathe babies and give massages, can now earn as much as 1200 RMB per month. This will enable her to send her two sons to college.

The CWDR is working closely with the domestic workers union to provide leadership development. Topics range from organizing skills like how to run meetings, to meetings with employers about how to be good employers, to professional skills like flower arrangement. Commenting on a recent training led by educators who used interactive popular education methods, Wang Weiya recalls, “The trainer wouldn’t let us just sit and listen. Everyone was required to get up and participate!” The union also celebrates International Women’s Day and other holidays, and holds outings. Says Jia Lijie, “We never had this before. It makes me feel young again.”

In spite of its admirable successes, the union faces tremendous obstacles. It is still a voluntary organization, and unlike other enterprise-based Chinese unions it does not receive financial assistance from employers or the local ACFTU. Membership dues are only 2 RMB per month, and only two-thirds of the 230 union members pay regularly on time. This means that union leaders must use their own mobile phones, do union work on their own time, and predictably they get burned out. In the past the CWDR has raised funds from Oxfam to help them, and it is currently seeking funds from other charitable foundations. However finding the resources to hire full-time union staff is still a major problem.

Upon hearing this, I asked the union leaders if they were interested in learning about the organizing successes of homecare workers in California. I told them about the long, difficult struggle to organize the workers at the grassroots, the establishment of an employer of record through legislation, and the power coalition that was built between the workers and the elderly and disabled persons for whom they provided care. The CWDR staff immediately noted that this was an effort to formalize an informal sector, and began to wrestle with new ideas. The union leaders came away from the conversation with inspiration, too. Jia Lijie said, “It took 12 years to organize 74,000 workers in Los Angeles, but we are now only in our third year. Maybe there is hope for us, after all.”

The interviews for this article were conducted on August 2, 2005 in Xi’an by Katie Quan.

**Where's Our Recovery?** *(Continued from page 1)*  
 for inflation, the average wage *fell* by .7 percent between the first halves of '04 and '05. This is the second year in a row that real wages (i.e., adjusted for inflation) fell in California, and wages have also fallen in the country as a whole. To Dube, these numbers illustrate the uneven and paradoxical nature of this recovery: "Here we are, in the fourth year of the recovery, and average real wages are *falling*, while GDP has been growing strongly, and profit has grown spectacularly, rising by 30 percent in total between 2002 and 2004 ..."

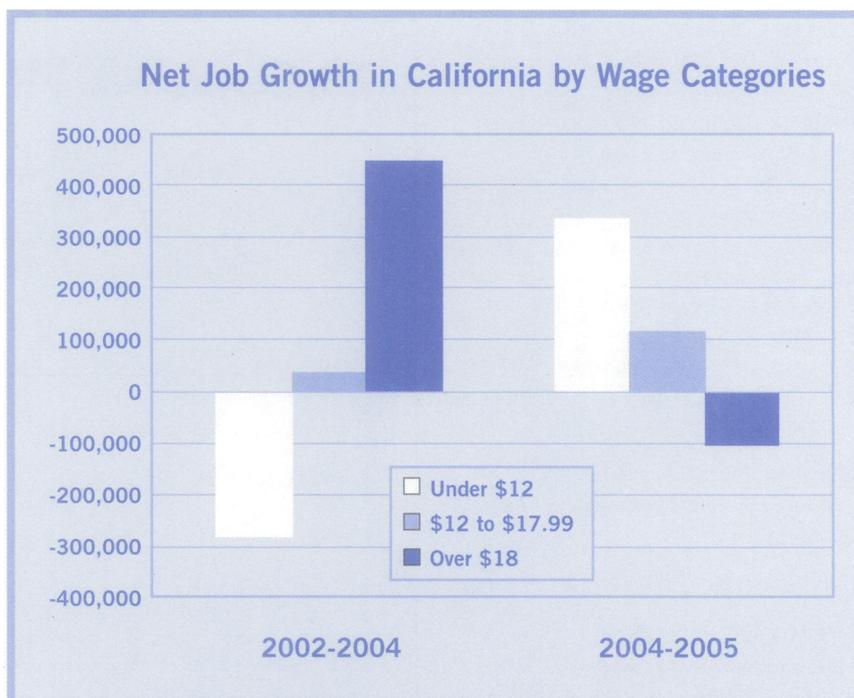
It is all the more remarkable that wages are falling in California given that the state minimum wage was raised from \$5.75 to \$6.75 during the period of the recovery. Though low-wage workers have fared better in California than nationally, their wage gains have been partly eroded by inflation over the three years since the minimum wage was increased.

#### Growth Industries

More troubling news can be found in an examination of the categories of jobs that are growing. Dube has found that between 2004 and 2005, the job categories that have grown in California pay \$2.50 *less* than the ones that have shrunk. The biggest growth has been seen in service and sales jobs in the restaurant, retail and hotel industries—jobs that pay less than \$12 per hour.

**“Here we are, in the fourth year of the recovery, and average real wages are falling . . . .”**

Also of concern is the fact that, within growing sectors, net new jobs in the construction and real estate industries account for 21 percent of all jobs added in the past three years. If the real estate boom is at least in part a bubble, these figures bode poorly for California workers. This is particularly worrisome because construction and real estate provide “middle-paying” jobs in California. In other words, both jobs and wages (that is, employment quantity *and* quality) could be negatively affected should there be a “price correction” in California’s housing market.



#### A Final Note

Dube’s analysis was conducted before the recent hurricanes, and therefore these rather grim trends cannot be blamed on oil price increases and other economic collateral damage from the storms.

Despite growth in GDP and profits, this economic recovery has been partial and uneven, and the ways in which it has stalled have hit workers the hardest. Dube’s analysis proves what many of us already know from experience: recovery or no recovery, things have not gotten much better for workers in California lately.



Arindrajit Dube’s report “Are We Recovering Yet? Jobs and Wages in California over the 2000-2005 Period” can be found on the Labor Center’s website: <http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu>.

## On the Move

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