

## “Reelect Roosevelt—Friend of Labor,” 1936

### Introduction

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This Democratic Party campaign poster from 1936 outlines some of the agencies and regulations Franklin Roosevelt put in place to try to solve the most urgent problems of the Great Depression. While it reminds laborers of how they have benefitted from the New Deal and encourages them to support Roosevelt’s reelection, it acknowledges that the Depression is not over and that “the unemployed still look for jobs.” The “printer’s bug” in the lower left indicates that the poster was printed by a union shop.

### Excerpt

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#### DEEDS—NOT WORDS

President Roosevelt has not given lip service to Labor. He did not promise a chicken in every pot and 2 cars in every garage. But he is doing all in his power to make life easier, safer, and happier for the average man and woman.

The “standpatters” and the greedy interests are “ganging up” against the President. They want a return to Republican prosperity—for the *few* at the top. President Roosevelt stands for lasting prosperity—in which *all* share, for “higher wages for workers, more income for farmers, more goods produced, more and better food eaten, fewer unemployed, and lower taxes.” (*Franklin D. Roosevelt, April, 1936.*)

### Questions for Discussion

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Read the introduction and the excerpt and carefully examine the image of the poster. Then apply your knowledge of American history to answer the following questions:

1. Identify Americans to whom the message in the poster was directed.
2. How did the poster suggest that gains and improvements might be continued and preserved?
3. Explain specific criticisms in the poster of those who opposed the plans and programs of President Roosevelt.
4. Examine the caption below the photo in the upper right corner of the poster. What message does the wording and the type face of caption convey?


## “Reelect Roosevelt—Friend of Labor,” 1936

### Image

**ROOSEVELT or REACTION?**  
*Wage Earners — Your Vote Is Your Answer*

“We cannot afford to make any change in the leadership of our present forward-looking social movement. We have been inspired and thrilled by the leadership that destiny has given us and we want to continue it without change.”

—WILLIAM GREEN, *President,*  
*American Federation of Labor*  
*Address before National Women's Trade Union League*  
(May 5, 1936)



**The REMEMBERED Man**

**DEEDS — NOT WORDS**

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**LABOR STEPS FORWARD**

**I. UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF** — The unemployed still look for jobs. But Democrats have not followed the Republican example of leaving men out of work to beg and starve. Instead of a \$15 monthly dole, Democrats have given millions of men self-respecting work, in their trades where possible, averaging \$50 a month on W.P.A. relief projects and paying prevailing rates under P.W.A.

**II. THE SOCIAL SECURITY ACT**—No federal law has brought greater protection to wage earners. Under it: (1) A worker, at 65 years, will get \$10 to \$85 a month, depending on service, in federal old age insurance to which both he and his employers have contributed; (2) a worker, who is out of a job, will get unemployment insurance, through a federal tax on payrolls, if his state passes an insurance law approved by the Federal Government; (3) states will get federal grants, matching their own grants, for old age pensions for *needy* aged (relief) and blind, for mothers’ pensions, child and mothers’ health care, child welfare and public health.

**III. THE RAILWAY PENSION ACT and THE RAILWAY AGREEMENT**—The former is a law setting up a special old age insurance system for railroad workers. The latter is a 5-year pact protecting men laid off by railroad mergers.

**IV. THE NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT**—The right of workers to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing is at last established by federal law. A National Labor Relations Board hears and adjusts cases (in industries in interstate commerce) where this legal right is denied. Up to April, the Board settled 317 out of 641 cases.

**Gains Made and Lost**

N.R.A. codes, covering 90 per cent of industrial workers, put 3 million men back in jobs by cutting the work week one-fifth, added 3 billion dollars to payrolls, banned sweat shops and child labor. Although wages have lagged, hours lengthened and child labor increased 58 per cent since the Act was declared unconstitutional, N.R.A. pulled the wage earner out of the lowest depression and aroused the nation to inhuman working conditions.

Since the Guffey Coal Act was outlawed by the Supreme Court, Democrats seek a legal way of preventing cut-throat competition and chaos in the soft coal industry.

Industry has reemployed more than 5 million workers  
Average weekly earnings (per worker) have gone up 23.7 per cent (March 1933-36)

**REELECT ROOSEVELT — FRIEND OF LABOR**

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

“Roosevelt or Reaction?” campaign poster, Democratic National Campaign Committee, 1936.  
(Gilder Lehrman Institute, GLC09532.08)