Der Präsident des US-amerikanischen Gewerkschaftsdachverbands AFL-CIO beschreibt in einem Artikel für die Washington Post, was es für die Menschen bedeutet, wenn die Einkommen sinken und zugleich der Staat sich aus der Verantwortung für Altersvorsorge und Gesundheitswesen davonstiehlt. In Deutschland droht es genau so schlimm zu kommen.

Denn während in den USA eine pragmatische Geld- und Fiskalpolitik das Wachstum unterstützt, wird der deutsche Binnenmarkt von makroökonomisch inkompetenten Politikern und ideologisch bornierten „Sachverständigen“ im Zustand andauernden Siechtums gehalten.
Statt von den ansonsten hochgelobten Erfolgen der USA wenigstens bei der Ankurbelung der Wirtschaft zu lernen, sollen ausschließlich deren wirtschafts- und sozialpolitische Fehler wiederholt werden. Am 18. September wird der deutsche Arbeitnehmer nach einem Mandat für die nächsten Angriffe auf seine Rechte, sein Einkommen und seine soziale Sicherheit gefragt.
Lesen Sie zur Vorbereitung auf Ihre Entscheidung, wohin das in den USA geführt hat:

Working Families Need Help

By John J. Sweeney

Never has a Labor Day marked a bigger disconnect between the conversation at working families’ kitchen tables and the chatter in the nation’s capital.

Unacknowledged by political and media elites, economic distress is buffeting workers’ lives — despite the long-awaited addition of new jobs to our economy.

Just like the deep fault lines of economic inequality exposed in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the problems that keep working families on the edge every day lie right beneath the surface. Wages are flat or falling. Health care costs, even for families fortunate enough to have employer-provided coverage, shot up 79 percent from 1996 to 2003. While CEOs get golden parachutes, companies such as United Airlines are grabbing back workers’ pensions. Plant shutdowns strand longtime employees in the seventh straight year of manufacturing job losses.

In a new survey conducted for the AFL-CIO by Peter D. Hart Research Associates, workers say the country is on the wrong track when it comes to health care, retirement security, and the quality and availability of jobs. The highest share of workers recorded, 53 percent, say their incomes are falling behind the cost of living. People are living on such thin margins that any shock to the household budget — witness the staggering impact of gas price hikes

— is a crisis.

Fully half of workers say they fear not being able to afford health care. Sixty-five percent say employers are falling short on providing retirement benefits — no wonder working families oppose privatizing Social Security.

Seventy-one percent of parents worry that they won't be able to afford education costs for their children. Six in 10 young workers say it's hard to find a good job and financial security, even with a college degree.

For America's workers, our country seems to have come off its moorings. Wages have become unhinged from productivity and corporate profits. Our families' well-being has become unhinged from broad economic measures of the country's well-being.

On the job, most Americans have no say, little respect and few rights, and two out of three workers don't trust employers to treat employees fairly.

By the same margin, they don't see anybody in Washington looking out for their economic interests. Not President Bush. Not Republicans in Congress. Not even Democrats in Congress. These twin failures, of the economy and of trust, are ominous.

Even Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan recently volunteered: "The income gap between the rich and the rest of the U.S. population has become so wide and is growing so fast that it might eventually threaten the stability of democratic capitalism itself."

If economic pain, low expectations and lost faith continue to harden into disaffection and alienation, our democracy is in deep trouble. We all must work to turn it around. Unions are ready to do our part — starting with doing more to help workers organize unions to bring democracy to the workplace. Fifty-three percent of nonunion workers say they would vote for a union tomorrow if they could — the highest percentage recorded in 20 years.

Yes, it's harder than ever for workers to organize. Employers routinely fight workers' attempts with ruthless campaigns of intimidation and even firings. That's why we are building support to pass laws to restore the freedom to organize. But against the odds, over the past 10 years 4 million workers formed unions. Even before changing the law, we have to help the 50 million other workers who want unions. We also have to bring workers around the world together to take on the greed of giant global corporations. More than ever, we must unite our voices.

The tragic disaffiliation of several major unions from the AFL-CIO makes it harder. Since the

secessions the Gallup Organization has found an increase in the percentage of Americans predicting a weakening of union power.

We will prove them wrong. We must lead a broad social movement again — and insist that America's leaders listen to the people who make this country work.

Working people — from construction workers to high-tech workers, nurses to graduate teaching assistants — show every day that they are ready to demand to be heard. They are protesting job outsourcing. They are taking action to stop the expansion of Wal-Mart, whose anti-worker practices drive down living standards. They are fighting for unions where they work. Our new community affiliate, Working America, has signed up 1 million working people as members in the fight for good jobs with health care, retirement security and fairness.

Together, we have to turn the nation's attention to issues that matter to America's workers:

Let's require big, profitable companies such as Wal-Mart to provide health care to their employees instead of passing the cost along to everybody else, and let's begin to develop a national health care plan that provides affordable coverage to all Americans.

We need to remove perverse policy incentives for companies to move jobs overseas, and treat labor the same way capital is treated in trade agreements.

We need to protect employees' right to receive the pay and pensions they have earned when their company files for bankruptcy, and we need to strengthen Social Security — not savage it with privatization.

And for starters, let's increase the pathetic minimum wage. Members of Congress have given themselves seven raises since minimum-wage workers last got one.

America needs good jobs. Working people know it. It's time for the rest of the country to get it, too.

The writer is president of the AFL-CIO.