

**LINDA CHAVEZ-THOMPSON**  
Executive Vice President, AFL-CIO

**Take Back America Conference**  
Campaign for America's Future / Institute for America's Future

**Plenary Session: An Economy that Works for Working  
People**

**Thursday, June 5, 2003**  
**Washington, DC**

Good morning.

I'm Linda Chavez-Thompson, the executive vice-president of the AFL-CIO... and I want to welcome all of you to this plenary. We're going to hear from some very creative, progressive, thoughtful people...

Jon Corzine, Jamie Galbraith, Barbara Ehrenreich, Leo Gerard, and David Paterson... about how to build an economy that works for working people.

Goodness knows we need an economy like that, for a change.

Today, after two years of George W. Bush in the White House, America has fewer jobs - more unemployment for longer periods -- stagnant wages -- falling incomes -- declining health coverage -- rising poverty -- more personal bankruptcies -- less retirement security -- the worst trade deficit in American history -- a ten-year deficit of \$1.2 trillion outside of Social Security -- and our state governments are in their worst crisis in generations, which means that mass transit, and schools, and Medicaid, and police, and firefighting are in big danger of being slashed.

What's the alternative?

Where should we be instead?

And how do we get there?

That's what we're here to talk about.

Our first speaker is Jon Corzine.

Jon started out his career as a successful investment banker... and he was elected senator from New Jersey in 2000. That was some of the very best news to come out of

that election... because ever since, Jon has been one of the strongest voices in the Democratic Party for issues that are important to working people, such as protecting Social Security and extending Medicare to include a prescription drug benefit for all seniors.

Please welcome one of the best friends that working people have in Washington -- Senator Jon Corzine.

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Our next speaker is James Galbraith.

Jamie has been teaching economics at the LBJ School and the Government Department at the University of Texas for years... but before that, he served as executive director of the Joint Economic Committee in Congress, back in those wonderful days when it did good and useful things.

In addition to teaching, he's also written a number of books, including *The Economic Problem -- Macroeconomics* -- and most recently, *Inequality and Industrial Change*.

Please welcome someone who's not only a highly respected economist, but -- even more important -- someone who's a far better Texan than any of those guys in the White House -- Professor James Galbraith.

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Our third speaker is Barbara Ehrenreich.

Now, it so happens that Barbara has a Ph.D. in biology from Rockefeller University... but I can guarantee you that no other biology Ph.D. from Rockefeller has had a career anything like Barbara's.

She's an author who writes brilliantly on just about everything.

She wrote about war in her book *Blood Rites*... and about the inner life of the middle class in her book *Fear of Falling*... and -- of course -- about what it's really like to be a low-wage working woman in *Nickel and Dimed*.

Along the way, she's contributed articles and reviews to the *New York Times Magazine*, *Atlantic*, *Esquire*, the *Nation*, and plenty of other publications... and she's won more grants and awards than anyone can count.

Please welcome one of the finest progressive journalists in America -- Barbara Ehrenreich.

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Our next speaker is Leo Gerard.

Leo has been in the union movement all his life. In fact, I bet that when he was in the maternity ward, he was probably organizing the other babies to demand better food and larger pension benefits. He joined the Steelworkers when he went to work for Inco's Smelter at age 18... and he's been a union activist ever since.

His sisters and brothers in the Steelworkers have trusted his leadership for years. He's served his union as director of District 6 in Ontario -- national director for Canada -- secretary-treasurer -- and now as president.

With Leo's guidance, the Steelworkers have struggled to help workers who are seeking a voice at work to organize into the union movement... and he's the driving force behind the Heartland Labor Capital Funds, which aim to include the welfare of working people in investment decisions.

Please welcome one of the most effective union leaders of this generation – Leo Gerard.

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Our final speaker is David Paterson.

It was 18 years ago when David was elected to the New York State Senate at the age of 31... and ever since that time, he's won a reputation as a fighter for social and economic justice for all New Yorkers, not just the rich and not just the lucky. It's no wonder that last year, his colleagues elected him to be minority leader of the Senate.

His district takes in Harlem and the Upper West Side of New York City... and it includes residents from just about every economic, and ethnic, and racial, and religious background. David, who is legally blind, is known throughout the country as a strong advocate for the rights of people with disabilities.

Please welcome one of the best state legislators in America – David Paterson.