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Shanley Raelly for Joe - April 26/75

Our gathering here today is a massive testimony to the fact that the American worker is fed up with the politics of deceit and the economics of scarcity. He will have nothing whatsoever to do with the notion that the way to pull this country out of its economic troubles is to run the economy through the wringer of a major depression. He will not, under any circumstances, passively submit to being the sacrificial lamb in the crusade against inflation while oil corporations reap massive profits, and multinational firms send jobs abroad, and businesses pass on the rising cost of living to the consumer.

The American worker wants equity. The American worker wants justice. And he will settle for nothing less.

There are now well over 10 million people unemployed in America, if we include those who are left out of the official statistics because they're either underemployed or have given up looking for work. Despite what can only be described as an economic catastrophe, we read reports in the papers that President Ford and his strategists are willing to accept over the long run a state of high joblessness because this would supposedly dampen inflation and because they believe that many of the unemployed are women and youth who do not really need jobs.

Then we have our city governments which are trying to balance budgets by creating more unemployment. But all this

will do is lead to more unemployment payments and lower tax receipts -- hardly a good way to balance a budget.

The simple fact is that unemployment makes bad economic sense, aside from all the human costs of wasted lives and social unrest. Each 1% of unemployment costs the Federal Government \$16 billion in taxes and \$5 billion are lost to state and local governments as well.

This is the time for a change in national direction. We now pay \$8,000 in unemployment compensation, welfare and food stamps and medical aid to each person unemployed. Why not spend this money to keep people working? Why not put those 10 million people to work providing health care, decent education, protection against fire and crime and other vitally needed social services? Why not make them productive, and thus make life better for all? Why not let them work to rebuild our cities and strengthen the American economy?

The result will not just be a healthier society with more social justice and less human misery. It will also lead to a restoration of America's sense of confidence and national purpose which today is also in a depression.

No force in American life has done more to achieve economic justice, or has a better sense of what the national

purpose should be, than the American labor movement.

Today's rally is a ringing confirmation that labor's on-going struggle for justice is the best hope we have for getting America moving once again.