



NEWS & VIEWS

LEHIGH VALLEY LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO
"UNIONS JOINING TOGETHER AS ONE"

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June 2026



TALKING TRADE AND TARIFFS. The United Auto Workers #677 held a town hall on building a fair economy for all Americans at their 2101 Mack Blvd., Allentown union headquarters on May 14. Ryan Harvey, organizer for Public Citizen, moderated the program with speakers onstage including: (left to right) Thea Lee, an economist who served in the Biden Labor Dept.; Mike Shupp, president of UAW #677; Arthur Stamoulis, director of Citizens Trade Campaign; and Dustin Guastella, research associate at the Center for Working-Class Politics and officer with Teamsters #623, Philadelphia.

Death on the job

Executive Summary: AFL-CIO's annual report on workplace safety in America, 2026

by the AFL-CIO

This 2026 edition of "Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect" marks the 35th year the AFL-CIO has produced the only comprehensive report on the state of safety and health protections for America's workers.

This report features national and state information on workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses, as well as workplace safety inspections, penalties, funding, staffing and public employee coverage under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act). It also includes information on the state of mine safety and health, key topics such as artificial intelligence, and prevention of workplace violence, musculoskeletal disorders, chemical exposures and heat illness, and transitions in policies on government occupational data reporting, transparency and equity. To see the full report, visit www.aflcio.org



Federal OSHA by the numbers

Fewer inspections

84: Number of years for federal OSHA to inspect each workplace once in 1991

191: Number of years for federal OSHA to inspect each workplace once in 2024

(Credit: AFL-CIO, "Death on the Job: The toll of Neglect, 2026")

This report focuses on the most recent data available from several sources: government job fatality, injury and illness data from 2024, government enforcement data from FY 2025 and peer-reviewed research, reports, union experience and other evidence.

Over the last 35 years of this report, job safety agencies' resources have diminished dramatically, even as their responsibilities have grown immensely. For instance, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is now in charge of 85% more establishments, 44% more workers and new hazards and technologies, yet Congress has reduced its budget by 10% and staffing by 26%, including a 16% reduction in inspectors. These percentages have massive impacts on such a tiny agency and very real personal effects on workers and their families.

Agencies now have a paltry number of staff to write standards, analyze data, conduct inspections, perform oversight on states, orchestrate needed research on important hazards and respond to emerging threats. The number of OSHA inspectors has now hit a new low, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) does not have enough inspectors to meet its statutory requirement to inspect each mine multiple times a year.

Federal OSHA by the numbers

More workers, fewer inspectors

54,952: Number of workers for every OSHA inspector in 1991

93,877: Number of workers for every OSHA inspector in 2024

(Credit: AFL-CIO, "Death on the Job: The toll of Neglect, 2026")

Fifty-five years ago on April 28, the OSH Act went into effect, promising every worker the right to a safe job. More than 735,000 workers now can say their lives have been saved since the passage of the OSH Act. The federal Mine Safety and Health Act was enacted 49 years ago. Since that era, workplace safety and health conditions have improved. But too many workers remain at serious risk of injury, illness or death as chemical plant explosions, major fires, construction collapses, infectious disease outbreaks, workplace assaults, toxic chemical exposures and other preventable tragedies continue to permeate the workplace. Workplace hazards still kill approximately 140,000 workers each year in the United States—including 5,070 from traumatic injuries in 2024 and an estimated 135,000 from occupational diseases each year. That is more than 380 workers each day. Job injury and illness numbers continue to be severe undercounts of the real problem. But these are all preventable.

Workplace safety is not solely a worker issue—it impacts all of us from the public, consumers and our families. When workers are protected, patients are safer; children are safer;

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Federal OSHA by the numbers

More workplaces, fewer inspectors

1,953: Number of federal and state inspectors to cover 6.5 million workplaces and 107 million workers under OSHA's jurisdiction in 1991

1,651: Number of federal and state inspectors to cover 12 million workplaces and 155 million workers under OSHA's jurisdiction in 2024.

(Credit: AFL-CIO, "Death on the Job: The toll of Neglect, 2026")

food is safer as it is grown, harvested and processed; families are protected from illness and economic instability; and communities are safer near industrial facilities and construction sites and on planes, trains, buses and roads. America can innovate best when strong worker protections are prioritized and the public is protected. But there needs to be political will.

Making progress is more challenging than ever. Corporate power has eroded worker protections for years, but under the Trump administration, corporations and billionaires are aggressively accelerating efforts to dismantle hard-won progress and the democratic institutions that uphold it. These structures have safeguarded workers from employers who prioritize excessive profit over effective safety measures, resist workers' rights and protections and seek to shift the responsibility for providing safe jobs from employers onto individual workers.

Federal OSHA by the numbers

More workers, fewer resources

\$6.53: OSHA's budget amounted to \$6.53 per worker in 1991 after inflation adjustments.

\$3.85: OSHA's budget amounted to \$3.85 per worker in 2024.

(Credit: AFL-CIO, "Death on the Job: The toll of Neglect, 2026")

National progress over the decades has undoubtedly made workplaces safer and saved lives. But that progress is under attack—now more than ever. The nation's workers now must fight fearlessly and vigorously to hold on to worker protections and public health systems, as they did a century ago to create agencies, laws and standards that keep us safe at work. We must prioritize protecting workers from job injury, disease and death, restoring dignity and justice to working people, improving livelihoods, and reducing burdens on families and communities over the whims and greed of billionaires. Employers must meet their responsibilities under the law to protect workers and be held accountable when they put workers in danger.

There is much more work to be done to ensure this promise and the promises of our nation's workplace health and safety laws are a reality for all of America's workers. We must hold the line to defend the protections we have won and to rebuild a better future.



Federal OSHA by the numbers

Penalties in FY 2025 still are too weak

\$4,678: The average penalty for a serious violation under federal OSHA

\$16,550: The median penalty for killing a worker under federal OSHA

144: The number of workplace death cases that have been criminally prosecuted under the Occupational Safety and Health Act since 1970.

(Credit: AFL-CIO, "Death on the Job: The toll of Neglect, 2026")

Important Lehigh Valley Labor Council Meeting

Recommendation of Candidates for the November Mid-Term Election

**Wednesday June 17, 7:30 p.m.
3614 Lehigh St., Whitehall**

President Jim Irwin urges all delegates to attend the council's June meeting and make recommendations for candidates for Congress, PA House and PA Senate

Council delegates congratulate Brooks Candidate looks forward to taking back PA 7th congressional district for working people

At the May monthly meeting, Lehigh Valley Labor Council delegates congratulated Bob Brooks, who won a hard-fought Democratic primary election campaign on May 19. Brooks described to council delegates how he will take back the 7th congressional district for working people.



Bob Brooks

Brooks's opponent will be current Lehigh Valley congressman Ryan Mackenzie. Mackenzie has spent his entire career in politics and has supported nearly all of Donald Trump's anti-labor initiatives since coming to Congress in January 2025.

In contrast, Brooks knows the struggles of working families. He has worked as a dishwasher, a bartender, a warehouse worker, a Teamster and a 20-year Bethlehem firefighter before becoming union president of the Pennsylvania Professional Fire Fighters Association.

Election Day is November 3.



Lehigh Valley Labor Council President Jim Irwin thanked all the major sponsors of the labor council awards banquet on April 18. The annual event always draws a large crowd to the Northampton Community Center, Northampton, thanks to the wonderful support of our local labor affiliates. Related story on page six.



The only slaves should be machines

The Lehigh County Patriot's "Ten Commandments of the Worker" as a historical lens on modern workplace disruptions

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council

The surge of artificial intelligence has ignited a deep suspicion among an increasing number of working-class Americans. Many worry about the potential upheaval of their work schedules and job responsibilities, while others fear their careers will be eliminated entirely. They gaze upon their economic future with uncertainty, if not alarm, convinced that corporate, business and political elites have directed this outcome to amass greater wealth and influence.

"The American people are deeply apprehensive about the impact that artificial intelligence will have on their lives," US Sen. Bernie Sanders wrote in an April 3, 2026 *Wall Street Journal* commentary. "At a time of massive income and wealth inequality, people recognize the revolution is being led by some of the wealthiest people in this country (who) are investing enormous sums in AI and robotics not to improve life for working families, but to expand their own wealth and power."

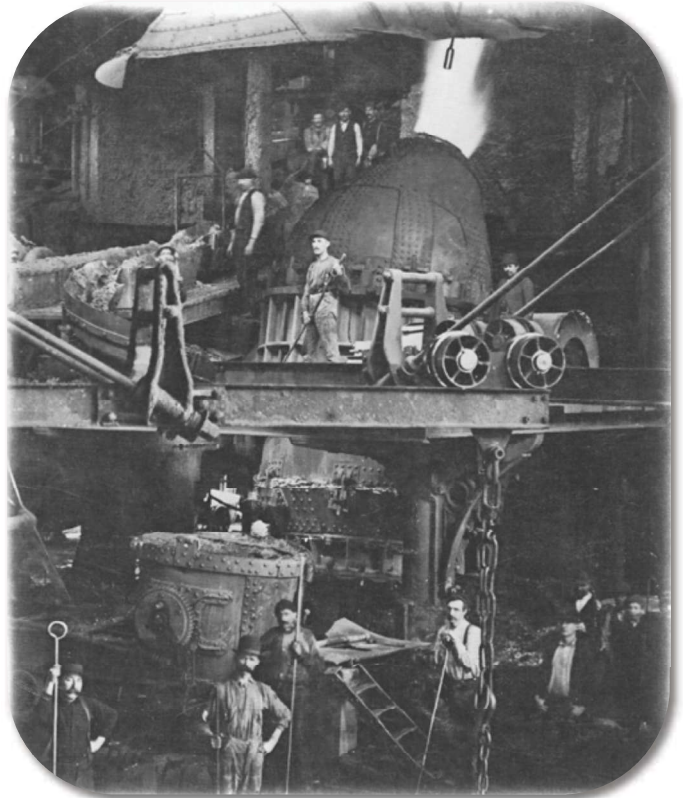
Nearly two hundred years ago, workers expressed a similar apprehension as they stood on the threshold of America's Industrial Revolution, while facing a rapidly advancing profit-driven economic system. They believed the emerging economy promoted selfish individualism by exploiting the Industrial Revolution's "labor-saving" machinery for the purpose of increasing output, rather than reducing toil. They warned that new anthracite-powered machinery had fueled a growing inequality, posing a threat to biblical beliefs and cherished ideals founded in America's War for Independence.

In March 1850, the German-language weekly newspaper *The Lehigh County Patriot* (Der Lecha Caunty Patriot) published an article explaining how workers should respond to these threats to their livelihoods. Entitled "The Ten Commandments of the Worker" (Die zehn Gebote der Arbeiter), the commandments articulated an economic vision that transcended mere pecuniary gain. It argued that the most profound loss suffered by workers was not material but social. The alliance of corporate chiefs and financiers, bolstered by their political allies, had seized control of the nation's economy, steering the Industrial Revolution and its technological advancements to their advantage. This collusion resulted in a dramatic erosion of workers' status and independence, a loss that could never be compensated by a mere increase in wages. To the editor of *The Patriot*, the true wealth of workers resided in their dignity and autonomy.

Understanding the context surrounding the publication of *The Ten Commandments of the Worker* may help us draw parallels to some of today's workplace disruptions and threats. An English version of the article could not be found, requiring a translation with German in parentheses. *The Ten Commandments* were edited for brevity.

1. You shall work (Du sollst arbeiten).

"One who does not work should not eat" (Wer nicht arbeitet soll auch nicht essen). All work had dignity and everyone was encouraged to make a contribution to society. The second commandment offered another explanation about work.



The Bessemer converter marked the first inexpensive technology for the mass production of steel from iron. The invention is named after Englishman Henry Bessemer, who took out a patent for it in 1856. As early as July 1867, the *Bethlehem Daily Times* argued that area iron companies should adopt this new technology. "There is no reason why steel rails should not be made here in our own Lehigh Valley" using the Bessemer process. The Bethlehem Iron Co., later known as Bethlehem Steel, began using the Bessemer process in 1873.

As the photograph depicts, working around the converter was extremely hot, dirty and dangerous.

The above image appeared on the front cover of "Bethlehem Steel: In Celebration of 75 years," published by the company's Public Affairs Dept. in 1979.

2. You shall tolerate no idler beside you (Du sollst keinen Müssiggänger neben dir dulden).

The rise of the Industrial Revolution, and its attendant profit-driven economy later called capitalism, created a managerial class that included administrators, assistants, foremen, supervisors, superintendents, boardroom directors and company owners. This cadre of bosses, who performed no manual labor themselves, usually received bonuses and other perks for pushing workers to produce more. What is widespread in today's workplace was profoundly unfamiliar and bitterly resented by workers in antebellum America. *The Patriot* offered the following advice to workers pressured to do more from their parasitic overseers: "If you see someone standing idly beside you who is capable of work, give him an apron and a hoe, and say to him: 'Now, get to work!'" (Wenn du einen siehst, der müssig neben dir steht und fähig zur Arbeit ist, so gib ihm ein Schurzfell und eine Hacke und sprich zu ihm: „Jetzt schaffe!")

3. *You shall not perform slave labor* (Du sollst keine Sklaven-Arbeit verrichten).

Steam power revolutionized manufacturing beyond the imagination of both workers and their employers. On the one hand, it powered machinery to produce goods with ever-increasing speed, which owners greeted with approval. On the other hand, steam-powered machinery produced excessive noise, dirt and workplace dangers, which workers objected to strenuously. Naturally, antagonism developed between the two sides. "There is at this moment," wrote W.F. Young, editor of the *Voice of Industry* on October 9, 1845, "a great strife between capital and labor and capital is fast gaining the mastery." Improvements in machinery that permitted greater efficiency led to "the gradual abasement of the working men and women."

The Patriot argued that this development had made workers extensions of the machinery, and concluded its third commandment with the demand that, "The only slaves that should exist in this world are the machines that are subservient to man" (Die einzigen Sklaven die es geben soll auf dieser Welt, das sind die Maschinen, die dem Menschen unterthen sind).

4. *You shall demand just wages for your work* (Du sollst gerechten Lohn für deine Arbeit fordern).

America's leading political parties agreed that the emerging economy had left workers behind. Local newspapers, such as the *Northampton County Whig & Journal* and the Democratic-leaning *Easton Argus*, blamed the other party for failing to keep their campaign promises to working-class voters.

In response to the finger pointing between the two major parties, workers took matters into their own hands. Canal boatmen struck the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company in 1843 and 1849, workers protested conditions in Pittsburgh's cotton mills, and Schuylkill County miners closed the region's collieries in the late 1840s, demanding payment in cash rather than company store orders. The editor of *The Pittsburgh Post* argued on May 12, 1843 that workers had no other recourse but to unionize and strike. "The ingenuity and shrewdness of the capitalist, whose increasing wealth begets a stronger desire for more, is ever active in devising ways to depress wages that his profits may increase. . . . Against such contrivances and schemes, the workingmen have no defense but to combine and strike."

The fourth commandment also stated that if business, financial and government elites demanded economic concessions during downturns, the cause of the depression lay with their avarice. Workers, *The Patriot* wrote, should tell the leaders of this unholy alliance that, "It is you that has created the bad times, not me. Business is bad because of your greed, your insatiable lust for money, and your fierce competition; you trample over one another, and in your downfall seek to drag us workers down with you. This must stop! (Die schlechte Zeit macht ihr, nicht ich. Euerer Habsucht, euerer unersättlichen Geldgier, euerer tollen Konkurrenz wegen gehen die Geschäfte schlecht; ihr überrennt Euch einer den Andern, und in euern Fall wollt ihr uns Arbeiter mit hineinziehen. Das muß aufhören!)

5. *You shall not go hungry* (Du sollst keinen Hunger leiden).

In the fifth and sixth commandments, *The Patriot* editor reminded his working-class readers that they deserved earth's bounty, too. Even the lowest of creatures are adequately fed by their labors, he argued. "Do you see, no sparrow falls of hunger from the rooftops, no worm crawls in the grass without being satisfied" (Siehst du, es fällt kein Sperling von dem Dache aus Hunger, kein Wurm kriecht im Grase, der sich nicht sättigt).

6. *You shall not go in ragged clothes* (Du sollst nicht in zer-risseuen Kleidern gehen).

The Patriot editor also noted that "the bird wears a handsome plumage; the bear has a thick, warm coat of fur" (Der Vogel trägt ein schmuckes Federkleid; der Bär hat einen ganzen warmen Pelz). Americans of this period could recall stories from their immigrant parents and grandparents, who arrived on a continent with endless forests, fertile fields stretching out to the horizon, and deep freshwater rivers teeming with fish. The editor argued in the fifth and sixth commandment that no laborer should be inadequately fed and clothed living in a nation with such abundance.

7. *You shall take joy in your life* (Du sollst dich deines Lebens freuen).

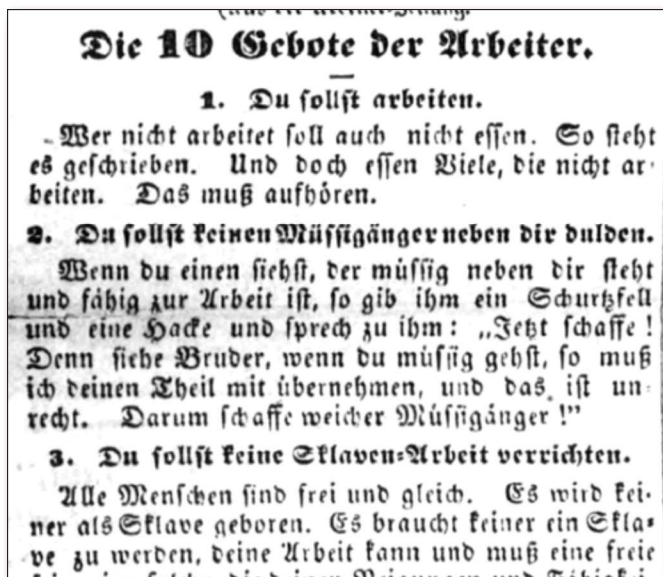
The remaining commandments suggested that the profit motive, a central feature of the new economy, conflicted with Christian ideals of benevolence, charity and justice. The seventh article applied to employer and employee alike who engaged in a single-minded pursuit of wealth. Writing in the March 20, 1846 *Voice of Industry*, one worker wrote that the pursuit of wealth "makes a total wreck of everything noble, generous or philanthropic," making "dollars . . . the only joyous sounds that strike upon the ear, . . . the only objects of sincere worship."

8. *You shall live with honor* (Du sollst in Ehren leben).

The Bible was the most commonly owned book in America in the early 1800s, and many workers could recite various passages. Among Old and New Testament scripture, verses included references to the treatment of workers. For example, "For the laborer is worthy of his hire (Luke 10:7), underscored the principle of fairness and equity in the workplace. Contemporary newspaper editors also quoted this verse when they thought workers suffered mistreatment.

An Old Testament passage, "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning (Leviticus 19:13), called for just and timely payment. A feature of the emerging capitalist economy, according to one historian, included the rising use of paper currency. It rested on

(continued on page seven)



The 10 Commandments of the Worker. The German-language *Lehigh County Patriot* published this article on March 21, 1850.

From the William Werkheiser Award to the Gregg Potter Award

The Lehigh Valley Labor Council's community service honor changes its name

by Gregg Potter, International Union of Operating Engineers #542
Executive Vice-President, Lehigh Valley Labor Council

I became a delegate to the Lehigh Valley Labor Council around 1998. I met John Werkheiser at my first meeting at the Steelworkers' Van Bittner Hall, in Bethlehem and that began what has become a lifetime friendship.

I heard about John's dad, William "Bill" Werkheiser, and some of the marvelous work he did for steelworkers over the years. The name of Bill Werkheiser was always spoken in reverence. I never had the opportunity to meet him but because I heard so much about him, it felt like I knew him forever. (Fig. #1)



William "Bill" Werkheiser (right) stands at the podium in 1995 with John Reck, a steelworkers union official and director of community services for the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO. Beginning in 1988, labor council delegates bestowed the William Werkheiser Award upon a person, persons, or an agency that had demonstrated strong community service leadership. Werkheiser's dedication to helping working-class families in the Lehigh Valley served as a model to future award recipients.

His son, John Werkheiser, urged the Lehigh Valley Labor Council to rename the community service award. This year's April 18, 2026 labor council dinner marked the first time the council awarded the Gregg J. Potter Community Service Award.

This labor council has always been a leader in community service and prior council leaders like Ron Achey, Dawn D'Andrea, Ellen Weiss and others really got my juices cooking.

Years ago, I worked for Verizon and they offered a generous match for employee individual and team donations. The first year utilizing this tool, our council was able to get over \$4,000 matched for Big Brothers-Big Sisters Bowl for Kid's Sake. (I love taking Verizon's money!!) I watched other council leaders receive the William Werkheiser Community Service Award and thought it was so cool to be acknowledged for something you love. I received this award in 2004 and remain in awe to be among some of the local icons who also received the Werkheiser Award.

When John discussed the option of changing the William Werkheiser Award to the Gregg Potter Award, I was beyond words. This honor, coming from my best friend meant more to me than anything and I am beyond humbled to have this award named after me. I only wish my parents could see this.



Gregg Potter (left) congratulated Allentown Police Lt. **John Leonard**. Leonard received the Gregg Potter Service Award for his community activism at the April 18 Lehigh Valley Labor Council Annual Awards banquet at the Northampton Community Center, Northampton. Formerly known as the William Werkheiser Community Service Award, the honor is given annually at the labor council banquet to an individual or agency that has demonstrated a deep commitment to helping Lehigh Valley working-families.

With this name change, I wanted to find an individual who exemplified the values that Bill Werkheiser preached as well as my personal criteria.

I met John Leonard about a year and a half ago and we had a breakfast at the Hamilton Family Restaurant, Allentown. Within two or three minutes, I knew this guy was special.

John has served as an Allentown Police Officer for about 15 years. He pours his heart and his values, instilled in him at a younger age which included time in Iraq with an explosives-detecting dog, into the community via the Police Athletic League. John rarely talks about himself, but rather he gushes over the kids in the Police Athletic League. His involvement is not just about getting kids to play basketball or volleyball. He sees the children as segues to our community.

When these children grow to be adult leaders, the neighbors look to them for guidance rather than immediately calling the police. They become leaders in their immediate community and address situations BEFORE the police intervene.

"Something as simple as checking on your senior neighbors, or making sure that downed stop sign, or burned-out street light is reported," John said, "aren't necessarily police issues but rather opportunities to regain some community ownership."

In addition to his involvement with the Police Athletic League, John volunteers with the Syrian Arab-American Charity Association food bank and has taught GED and citizenship classes at The Literacy Center in Allentown. He also served as the Police Department's Community Outreach Officer for five years and has continued the fine work that was done by Detective Stanko.

The Allentown Police Dept. recently promoted John to Lieutenant and *Lehigh Valley Style* acknowledged him as one of 2026's Influential Men of the Year. He will eventually make one heck of a police chief and I am very proud to call him my friend and the recipient of the inaugural Gregg Potter Excellence in Service Award.



DOGE – a year later

Trump's Dept. of Government Efficiency left the federal workforce understaffed, weakened

by Ron Ennis, Editor
Lehigh Valley Labor Council



Early last month marked Public Service Recognition Week. The annual event, held during the first full week of May, honors the thousands of dedicated public servants who serve our nation as federal, state, county, local and tribal

government workers.

The weeklong annual event also includes an Oscars-like ceremony for federal workers in Washington, D.C. Organizers for this year's May 6 ceremony shared video appearances with former presidents George W. Bush and Joe Biden, but the current White House occupant went unmentioned. Attendance at the affair also significantly shrunk from previous ceremonies. "Many federal workers," wrote *The Washington Post* on May 7, "expressed a fear of retaliation" from Donald Trump if they attended the ceremony.

Trump's assault on federal employees began with his embrace of the 900-page Project 2025, a right-wing policy blueprint to cut government services and workers. Project 2025's proposed cuts included firing workers, dismantling federal employee unions, and instituting a governmentwide hiring freeze. Trump nominated Russell Vought, a lead author of Project 2025 who wanted federal workers "traumatically affected" upon losing their jobs, as his director of the Office of Management and Budget. He also established the Dept. of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to help achieve his job-cutting goals, and tapped tech mogul Elon Musk to eliminate "waste, fraud and abuse," by purging the federal payroll of workers. A November 16, 2024 *Wall Street Journal* opinion labeled DOGE as Trump's "best idea." The federal workforce had "ballooned" during President Joe Biden's tenure, and union protections for public servants needed to be scrapped. "Civil service and union protections make it hard to fire workers."

The Journal editors' opinions soon withered under the onslaught of facts. In a November 27, 2024 letter to *The Journal*, American Federation of Government Employees President Everett Kelley wrote that federal employment numbers had substantially declined since 1967, even as the U.S. population had nearly doubled, and added that roughly 10,000 employees are fired from the federal payroll every year. Meanwhile, the for-profit, private contract workforce had grown annually, championed by Republican politicians who would routinely cut their oversight. "Let's be honest about where the waste, fraud and abuse is happening," Kelley wrote. "I've seen firsthand the waste resulting from . . . private contractors milking the government for all it's worth."

The Journal editors also assumed that Trump would enact the job cuts legally. Instead, his incompetence led to more than a dozen lawsuits. Workers "challenged everything," *The Associated Press* wrote on March 29, 2026, "from the cancellation of grants, mass firings and buyouts." Although courts have not made final rulings in every case, many workers could receive back pay and benefits.

Finally, *The Journal* editors failed to appreciate the carnage that would be left behind by Trump's chaotic implementation of the job cuts. The latest government statistics estimated

that over 400,000 civil servants left Uncle Sam's employ since DOGE arrived. Among them were 95,000 science workers, including 10,000 PhD-level science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experts, and 56,000 Dept. of Veterans Affairs employees responsible for providing healthcare to over nine million veterans.

"The deeper danger is not only the weakening of government's ability to deliver core services today," wrote David Lebrayk, a former US Treasury official in an online post on May 6, 2026. "It is the weakening of its ability to take on bigger challenges and respond to the unforeseen, but inevitable, crises of tomorrow." We have yet to see the full damage to our nation's government.



The ten commandments

(continued from page five)

"banknotes, bonds, mortgages, bills of exchange, and stocks (which) seemed to form a floating spider web of poisonous paper, catching up and devouring the hard-earned fruits of honest labor." Many workers viewed the new antebellum economic system amid the Industrial Revolution as violating core religious principles.

9. *You shall close your ear to heartless priests* (Du sollst dein Ohr schliessen vor gefühllosen Pfaffen).

The Patriot took to task contemporary religious leaders who offered working-class families little to no respite in their present distress, but only comfort in the hereafter. "It is not here," the clergy say, "that you are to find enjoyment, but in the beyond. Here, endure; up there, you will be rewarded" (Nicht hier," sagen sie, "sollst du geniessen, sondern jenseits. Hier dulde, dort oben wirst du belohnt).

10. *You shall love your neighbor as yourself* (Du sollst deinen Nächsten lieben wie dich Selbst).

This last commandment borrowed from Matthew 22:39, where Jesus instructs his disciples to treat others with the same care, kindness and respect one has for oneself.

Readers of *The Patriot* were the descendants of Revolutionary fathers and mothers. They grew up under John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and James Monroe were presidents. They mourned the news of the deaths. These workers understood, in a way that twenty-first century workers do not, the sacrifices made to establish a new nation free from monarchical aristocracy. They fervently believed that the emerging capitalist system dishonored their parents and grandparents' sacrifices by replacing a monarchical aristocracy with an equally despised moneyed aristocracy.

This moneyed aristocracy sought to replace cooperation with competition, generosity with selfishness, community with individualism, and charity with greed. Antebellum workers argued that the emerging economy violated core principles that formed the basis of American democracy. *The Patriot* editor concluded that, "Freedom and equality come from one thing: brotherhood (Freiheit und Gleichheit gehen nur von einem: der Brüderlichkeit). "Alone you are weak; in community, strong and mighty. Therefore, love your neighbor as yourself, and he will love you in return as himself" (Einzel bist du schwach, in Gemeinschaft stark und kräftig. Darum liebe deinen Nächsten, wie dich selbst, und er wird dich wieder lieben wie sich Selbst).

In 1850, "The Ten Commandments of the Worker" offered guidelines to laboring men and women confronting new technologies and a rapidly changing economy. Nearly two hundred years later, the commandments offer invaluable insight for today's workers.



Everett Kelley
AFGE

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WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2026

Executive Board @ 7:00 PM – Delegate meeting @ 7:30 PM

Teamsters #773 3614 Lehigh Street, Whitehall PA 18052

(One block east of the Whitehall Township Police Department)

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