

Decline of good jobs tied to workers' decreased bargaining power

By TULA CONNELL

Many U.S. workers don't have jobs — nearly 13 million. Less known, however, is that many more don't have good jobs — fewer than one-quarter of America's workforce, according to a new report from the Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). The center defines a good job as one that pays at least \$18.50 an hour, or \$37,000 per year, equal to the inflation-adjusted earnings of the typical male worker in 1979. A good job also includes employer-provided health insurance and a retirement plan.

The lack of available good jobs is not new. As CEPR finds, compared with 1979, the U.S. economy has lost about one-third (28 percent to 38 percent) of its capacity to generate good jobs. But why?

The report, "Where Have All the Good Jobs Gone?" outlines how the decline in the economy's ability to produce good jobs is directly related to workers' declining bargaining power. The study points to the fall in the inflation-adjusted value of the minimum wage, the decline in union representation, trade deals, high unemployment,

and other factors that reduce the bargaining power of workers relative to their employers.

"The standard explanation for this loss of the economy's ability to create good jobs is that most workers skills have not kept up with the pace of technological change," says John Schmitt, senior economist at CEPR and one of the report's co-authors.

"But it is hard to reconcile that view with the fact that even workers with a college degree are less likely to have a good job now than at the end of the 1970s," Schmitt said.

Further, according to the report, more than one-third of U.S. workers

Son of union member wins Olympic gold

Nathan Adrian of Bremerton, Washington, the son of a union member, won an Olympic gold medal in the 100-meter freestyle swim in London.

In a dramatic, heart-racing sprint, Adrian beat the gold-medal favorite, Australian James "The Missile" Magnussen by one-hundredth of a second.

Adrian also received a silver medal as the lead off swimmer for the 4x100-meter freestyle relay team and a gold medal as the anchor for the medley relay team in Michael Phelps' final swim.

Adrian's father, Jim, is a retired nuclear engineer for the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and former president of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers Local 12. Jim was a 24-year member of the union.

Guide Dogs golf tourney Sept. 10

The 24th annual Machinists District W24 Guide Dogs of America Golf Tournament is slated for Monday, Sept. 10, at Heron Lakes Golf Club in Portland. A shotgun start is at 8:30 a.m.

Corporate and union sponsorships are available starting at \$250 and topping out at \$1,000. Entry to the golf tournament is \$125 per golfer.

All proceeds benefit Guide Dogs of America.

For more information, contact Dan Sass at 503-238-5550, John Hall at 503-449-0969, Stacy Breunig at 503-702-9879, or go online at www.iamw24.org.

had a four-year college degree or more, up from just one-fifth in 1979.

"Given that older and better-educated workers generally receive higher pay and better benefits, we would have

expected the share of 'good jobs' in the economy to have increased in line with improvements in the quality of workforce. Instead, the share of 'good jobs' in the U.S. economy has actually

fallen," Schmitt said.

To see the full report, go online to www.cepr.net.

(Editor's Note: Tula Connell writes for the AFL-CIO NOW blog.)

...Airport screeners

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view that ensures transparency, Gage said.

"And contrary to some of the misinformation circulating about TSA, an agreement will not adversely affect security — security-related matters were strictly excluded from negotiations," said Kim Kraynak-Lambert, president of AFGE TSA Council 100. "In fact, this agreement will strengthen our ability to carry out TSA's vital mission of protecting the American people."

Gage, 66, retired from AFGE's top post this week at the union's convention in Las Vegas. He has served as president for nine years. He listed accomplishment of the TSA contract as one of his three last goals when he announced his retirement two months before.

(Editor's Note: Mike Hall of the national AFL-CIONow blog and Press Associates Inc. contributed to this report.)

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