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SANDERS INTRODUCES WORKERS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Rep. Bernard Sanders said today that he will introduce and co-sponsor a series of bills designed to help insure that every American has a decent job at decent wages, with health care benefits.

Sanders dubbed the legislation a "Workers' Bill of Rights" saying that it addresses the following areas:

- job creation and the role of government in moving the nation toward a full employment economy;
- the need to raise the minimum wage significantly;
- the need to increase the amount of vacation time available for American workers;
- the need to alter labor law so that workers can unionize more easily;
- the need for a national health care system.

Sanders plans to support legislation raising the minimum wage from the current \$4.25 an hour to at least \$5 an hour. He plans to reintroduce the Workplace Democracy Act which would make it easier for workers to form unions. And he will reintroduce legislation which would create a single-payer national health care system. He also will support legislation designed to jump-start the economy. He noted that a \$50 billion investment in the infrastructure would create up to 2 million new jobs.

"During the Reagan-Bush era, the government of the United States worked effectively to protect the interests of the wealthy and the powerful," Sanders said. "If the 1980s were the time in which the rich grew richer at everyone else's expense, the 1990s must be the period in which working people see a significant improvement in their standard of living and their quality of life."

Sanders noted that whereas someone earning the minimum wage in the 1960s could support a family of three above the poverty line, by 1989, the same minimum wage worker fell 29 percent below the poverty line. "Workers deserve a decent wage -- wages with which they can raise a family in dignity," he said.

Workers also deserve to have reasonable vacation time and to be able to form unions and fight for improved working conditions, he said. The Workplace Democracy Act would undo many of the obstacles and anti-worker biases which exist in labor law.

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