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American Dream Losing Ground in Global Economy, Poll Charges

By Randy Hall

(CNSNews.com) - Nearly 70 percent of U.S. workers say that their top concern is basic security, not the opportunity inherent in the American dream, according to a survey released on Wednesday by a coalition of labor unions. However, a conservative analyst called the poll "a move by the unions to stay relevant."

"There are no red states or blue states in working America; there is only a state of concern," said Anna Burger, chair of the Change to Win federation, which sponsored the survey to give workers a chance "to articulate the type of actions they want to see from their government" to ensure they "can share in the benefits of today's global economy."

"The challenge to America - from the corporate boardroom to Congress, from Wall Street to Pennsylvania Avenue - is to keep the dream real for the workers who are the basis of the new American economy and the next generation," she said in a news release.

Burger said that the findings in "The Working American

Dream Agenda 2007" are "a stunning reflection of the anxiety, anger and demand for action rising in working America in the global economy."

According to the Change to Win statement, key results of the poll of 800 non-supervisory workers include:

-- Nearly 80 percent of workers, both college and non-college alike, no longer believe the next generation will be better off. Nearly half think their children will be worse off.

-- Nearly 80 percent of workers view multinational corporations as too powerful and have driven down wages, eliminated health care and retirement security, and disregarded labor laws.

-- Nearly 70 percent of workers feel the government doesn't take action to rein in greedy and unethical behavior by corporations and CEOs.

"The survey also indicates that workers see few opportunities for good jobs while they face the financial insecurity of rising health-care costs, the

elimination of pensions, the outsourcing of jobs and wages falling behind living costs," the release added.

"The workers of the new economy are not low-wage workers in low-wage jobs, they are underpaid workers in underpaid occupations," said Burger.

"But even as workers see growing, powerful economic forces eroding its very foundation, workers still have hope that together, they can take action and restore the American dream for the next generation," she noted.

Respondents said they are looking for a strong action agenda in which government plays a key role in economic solutions to help working families now struggling with rising costs, eroding benefits and stagnant wages, Burger added.

In addition, she said, workers are demanding a change in corporate behavior, and they want government to hold corporate America accountable so that workers can share in the profits they help generate

for their companies.

"Nearly nine out of 10 workers also see joining together in unions as a vehicle to help win a paycheck that supports a family, quality, affordable health care and a secure retirement - the same goals they cite as vital to reaching the American dream."

As **Cybercast News Service** previously reported, the Change to Win federation conducted a similar survey six months ago which found that "the American dream is slipping away from many workers in the U.S."

Matt Moore, senior policy analyst with the conservative National Center for Policy Analysis, told Cybercast News Service Wednesday that the surveys are part of "a move by the unions to stay relevant" even though their membership stands at an all-time low of 12 percent of the U.S. work force.

"The American dream is *not* dead," Moore said.

"Unfortunately, if we adopt this group's so-called solutions, we may well kill it. All their plans involve higher taxes on corporations and more government spending, which will do nothing but raise taxes on workers, stifle innovation and hamper economic growth.

"Do you want to kill the American dream?" he asked. "That's the recipe."

Regarding the poll findings, Moore said: "It's no wonder that workers are worried about the future, because they see Social Security and Medicare promising trillions more in benefits than they can afford. That's a real threat to retirement security.

"And they see that government spending and regulation are out of control," he added. "We need to put the breaks on

spending, reform Social Security and Medicare the right way, simplify the tax code, and put patients in charge of their health-care money.

"That's how we can empower people and restore their faith in the American dream," Moore said.

In September 2005, a number of unions dissatisfied with the leadership of the AFL-CIO left that organization to create the Change to Win federation.

The organization now consists of Service Employees International Union, UNITE HERE, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Laborers' International Union of North America, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and United Farm Workers of America.