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AS THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ENACTMENT OF THE 40 HOUR WORK WEEK APPROACHES, TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DECLARES: 40 IS ENOUGH!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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We can provide interview subjects for reporters who wish to cover this story.

SEATTLE, WA: With many Americans putting in more than 40 hours at work every week, Take Back Your Time, a US/Canadian initiative challenging the issues of overwork, over-scheduling and time poverty, is calling for an end to excessive work hours, and declaring that “40 IS ENOUGH!”

October 24th is Take Back Your Time Day, and this October 24th marks the 65th anniversary of the day in 1940 when the 40-hour workweek became the law of the land.

“It’s 65 years later, productivity is quadruple what it was then, and still most Americans are working more than 40 hours a week,” says John de Graaf, Take Back Your Time’s National Coordinator, “If 40 hours was enough to support a family then, it should take even less work time now. We need to start by getting the workweek back down to 40 hours.”

Take Back Your Time promotes a variety of activities to celebrate Take Back Your Time Day – from spending time with family and friends, to organizing events on college campuses, in workplaces, union halls and places of worship. This year, the organization will also encourage discussions about how to take back the 40 hour week.

“We need to bring down the excessive work hours of those salaried workers who are financially compensated for their work but have no restrictions on their hours, guarantee the rights of hourly workers to receive premium pay for overtime, and bring up the wages of those workers at bottom of the economic spectrum so they only have to work 40 hours a week to support themselves and their families,” explains de Graaf.

Take Back Your Time proposes the following:

- Well-paid but long-hour salaried workers should be given comp time for time required of them by their employers that exceeds the 40-hour standard.
- Time and a half overtime premiums for hourly workers must be protected and strengthened, not weakened as they have been recently. It must not be made easier to declare workers managers and therefore avoid paying overtime. Time and half

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- must be protected for any work beyond 40 hours a week (and 8 hours a day where contracts call for that), not so workers can earn more but because the overtime premium is a deterrent to compulsory overtime being required by employers. Ultimately, we would like to see all work hours over 40 be a voluntary decision and currently, our “Time to Care” Agenda calls for a cap on compulsory work hours at 48 per week.
- No American should need to work more than 40 hours a week to support a family above the poverty line. If the minimum wage had expanded as much as the salaries of corporate CEOs, it would now be around \$25 an hour! Even if it kept pace with the cost of living, it would now be nearly \$9 an hour. Yet the Federal Minimum Wage is still only \$5.15 per hour, about half that of most European countries and Australia. We support efforts to achieve a living wage so that anyone working 40 hours per week should not have to live in poverty.

“We need bread (a living wage), but we need roses (shorter work time) too,” says Richard Hobbs, Take Back Your Time Board Member and director of the Office of Human Relations in Santa Clara County, California . “What good is having the highest Gross National Product, if it does not leave us time to spend with our families and children, contribute to our communities, and take care of our health and the environment?”

“We are the only industrialized nation with no mandatory vacation laws, no mandatory sick leave, no paid family leave, and no national health care system, and these realities combined with overwork lead to high levels of obesity, illnesses, stress, and alienation of millions from ourselves, our families, our friends, our communities, and our higher beings,” explains Hobbs.

On October 18th, Hobbs will be asking the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors to approve a resolution honoring the 65th Anniversary of the 40 Hour Work Week and the Third Annual Take Back Your Time Day on October 24, 2005.

To learn more about 40 HOURS IS ENOUGH, Take Back Your Time, and the events and activities planned for October 24, 2005, visit www.timeday.org.

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Take Back Your Time is a project of the Center for Religion, Ethics and Social Policy at Cornell University, and is the first national initiative of the Simplicity Forum.