



TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY

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THE TIME IS NOW - TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY, OCTOBER 24, 2003

Seattle, WA— Americans are working too much, according to 85% of the 7800 Americans who participated in a recent CNN money.com poll. 4 in 5 Americans wish they had more time to spend with family, according to a poll commissioned by the Center for a New American Dream and half of all Americans even say they'd trade some of their pay for more time off.

Their concerns are buttressed by the fact that barely half of all Americans took a week's vacation this past summer, and that while millions of Americans have lost their jobs to the recession, many more are working longer hours and more mandatory overtime than ever.

"The evidence is clear – over work and over-scheduling are pressing, daily concerns for many Americans," says John de Graaf, National Coordinator for **Take Back Your Time Day**, and editor of the new book, *Take Back Your Time*, just released by Berrett-Koehler Publishers. "We want people to know that the problem is not theirs alone, it is a national concern that needs to be addressed now."

Friday, October 24th is **Take Back Your Time Day**, a non-partisan educational initiative to address the problems of over work, over scheduling and what the organizers are calling "time poverty." October 24th falls nine weeks before the end of the year, symbolizing the nine weeks—350 hours—more each year that Americans work compared to western Europeans.

From Anchorage, Alaska to Boston, Massachusetts, and from Washington D.C. to San Diego, thousands of Americans will gather at community centers, places of worship, union halls, museums, bookstores, and on university and college campuses to start a national conversation about how Americans can live more balanced lives. About a hundred communities throughout the United States will take part in the event.

"The interest we've received has been very encouraging. It's crossed economic, political and cultural lines," says Gretchen Burger, lead organizer of **Take Back Your Time Day** (www.timeday.org).

The campaign has won endorsements from labor unions, religious and family organizations (endorsers are listed on the Web site: www.timeday.org). Most recently, it's been gaining endorsements from the political establishment.

Several cities, including Seattle and Duluth, Minnesota, and the governor of Michigan have officially proclaimed October 24th as Take Back Your Time Day. On September 8th, Resolution 210 (submitted by Senators Hatch and Alexander (R) and Kennedy and Dodd (D)), declaring October National Work

and Family Month passed the U.S. Senate by unanimous consent, with the goal of “reducing the conflict between work and family.”

Organizers hope that **Take Back Your Time Day** will do for Americans’ overworked and stressed out lives what Earth Day did for the planet. They are asking each group that gathers on October 24th to send in their solutions, which will range from the personal to the political. They will also circulate a petition to present to all Presidential candidates to demonstrate the support for addressing these issues and call on them for action. They believe that **Take Back Your Time Day** has achieved sufficient momentum to continue and grow in the coming years.

“**Take Back Your Time Day** is not anti-work,” says Jeanette Watkins, founder of People for a Shorter Work Week and Take Back Your Time Day volunteer. “But American life has gotten way out of balance. Americans are working harder than ever as they are forced to sacrifice the things that really matter, like good health, active citizenship and time for their families, nature and the soul. We need to bring the balance back.”

Take Back Your Time Day 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.

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