



TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY

For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE— TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

70th Anniversary of 30-Hour Workweek Bill Finds Americans Ready to Take Back Their Time

Seventy years ago, believe it or not, the United States Senate overwhelmingly passed a bill that would have made the official U.S. workweek *thirty* hours—anything more would have been overtime. On April 6, 2003, the 70th anniversary of that momentous but forgotten event in U.S. history, organizers of a new initiative to fight overwork and time poverty will officially launch the “Take Back Your Time” campaign (www.timeday.org), leading to a national event organizers call “**Take Back Your Time Day**,” to be held on October 24, 2003.

The More Things Change...

The Senate’s goal back in 1933 was to create jobs for the unemployed, while giving workers time for family life, education, recreation and civic participation. Yet in 2003, the National Sleep Foundation reports that a third of all Americans work more than **fifty** hours each week. According to the International Labor Organization, Americans now work 1,978 hours annually, a full 350 hours—nine weeks—more than Western Europeans average. Juliet Schor, author of *The Overworked American*, estimates that the average American now works 199 hours—five weeks—more each year than he or she did thirty years ago.

“Medieval peasants worked less than we do,” says Take Back Your Time’s national coordinator John de Graaf, editor of the upcoming book *Take Back Your Time* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers), to be released this summer. “Don’t get me wrong, Take Back Your Time Day is not anti-work. But the fact is that 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 and a clean environment, active citizenship and social justice, and time for nature and the soul.”

“Time is a family value,” adds Bill Doherty, a family therapist at the University of Minnesota and co-author of *Putting Family First*. “But now families rarely have time to eat dinner together and even our children are being pushed into schedules that used to be reserved for CEOs. Overwork and over-scheduling are weakening the bonds that hold our families together.”

“Earth Day” of Time

Jerome Segal, a professor at the University of Maryland and author of *Graceful Simplicity*, hopes that on Friday, October 24th, thousands of Americans will participate in teach-ins and other public events to begin a new national non-partisan dialogue about time poverty and what we can do about it.

“The date falls nine weeks before the end of the year, symbolizing the nine full weeks more we work each year compared to our trans-Atlantic neighbors,” he adds. “We see it as being like the first Earth Day, which stirred the consciousness of America about what we were doing to the environment. Take Back Your Time Day could do for our overworked, over-scheduled, overstressed lives what Earth Day did for the planet.”

NOTE: We can offer experts around the country for you to speak with, and provide b-roll for television.

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