



TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY

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PO Box 19862 Seattle, WA 98109-6862

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – JUNE 4, 2003

FROM: TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE

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For Father's Day, There's No Present Like the Time *New national initiative aims to challenge overwork in America*

Seattle, WA. -- With Father's Day fast approaching it's appropriate to ask what dads need most. Advertisers might suggest a new tie. But what Dad really needs this Father's Day is more *time*.

Today, the average American dad is putting in about 48 hours per week on the job. Dad now works more each year than do even the legendary overworked Japanese. Fathers in Western Europe get an average of six weeks of paid vacation per year, while in the U.S., Dad is lucky to receive 2 weeks to spend with his family.

"If employers really want to honor Dad this year, they could start by giving him some time off," says Gretchen Burger, spokesperson for TAKE BACK YOUR TIME DAY (www.timeday.org), a new non-partisan national initiative scheduled for October 24, 2003.

On that day, concerned Americans all across the country will participate in teach-ins and other events to challenge overwork and time poverty in America. The date falls nine weeks before the end of the year, symbolizing the fact that Americans now work nine weeks more each year than Western Europeans do.

"The goal of Take Back Your Time Day is to get all Americans talking about our lack of time and what we can do to reclaim our frenzied lives. There's no present like the time," says John de Graaf, editor of the upcoming *Take Back Your Time* (Berrett-Koehler Publishers). "American families need more from Dad than just a paycheck. They need Dad's time too."

"New efforts to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act may mean even longer hours of work for fathers" claims Karen Nussbaum, assistant to the President of the AFL-CIO and a member of the Take Back Your Time Day steering committee. "Millions of American workers could be re-classified as managers, meaning they would not even receive overtime pay for the longer hours their employers require of them. We need to recognize their right to family time."

"One way to give them at least a little more family time would be to create two 'family day' holidays on the Mondays after Father's Day and Mother's Day," suggests Jerome Segal, of the University of Maryland.

More time for family involvement makes healthier families. Many recent surveys find that fathers place family time at or near the top of their life-plan. Kathleen Gerson, professor of sociology at New York University reports that two-thirds of men she interviewed want to share parenting and work.

"Such sharing is especially needed now that most families have two parents working outside the home, and since annual work hours for married couples among the middle-class have risen by 20% since 1970," adds Dr. Juliet Schor of Boston College, author of *The Overworked American* and a supporter of Take Back Your Time Day.

Family therapist Bill Doherty of the University of Minnesota, co-author of *Putting Family First*, points out that "the number of families that usually eat dinner together has dropped by a third since the late 1970s, and the number of families taking vacations has fallen by 28 percent." One study showed that dual-income couples spend only 12 minutes a day talking to each other. The federally-funded Adolescent Health Survey of American teenagers found a strong link between regular family meals and a wide range of positive outcomes such as higher academic success, better psychological adjustment, less alcohol and drug use, lower suicide risk, and postponement of teen sexual behavior.

"In all of our talk about family values, we often forget that time may be the most important family value of all," adds Bill Doherty. "It takes time to keep a family together and raise healthy, happy children who will grow up to be good citizens. We've got to begin to take time poverty seriously as a nation, and Take Back Your Time Day is the way to begin the dialogue."

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

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