21st Century Workforce for Human Security

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Panelists: Moderated panel discussion with Shelly Steward, Director of the Future of Work Initiative, Aspen Institute; Melissa Boteach, Vice President for Income Security and Child Care/Early Learning, National Women's Law Center; Haeyoung Yoon, Senior Policy Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance; and Adam Shah, Director of National Policy, Jobs With Justice. Nancy Parrish, Executive Director at WAND moderated the discussion.

Problem: Security at home and in work is crucial for a thriving people and a thriving democracy. As the nation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic, reforms in the workplace are essential to ensure living wages, healthcare, and benefits for workers, while a new approach to the global economy will be needed to close existing gaps in the labor market. The pandemic not only accelerated existing trends in remote work, e-commerce and automation, it exacerbated existing inequalities in income, gender-pay, and worker social class. How can the future of work in a post-pandemic economy ensure working families are free from poverty and receive full benefits, while also providing adequate training to fulfill gaps in workers' skills?

Based on the conversation, our panelists had the following policy recommendations:

- **Research and amplify workforce policies that already exist.** Research what employee benefit and protection programs your state already has before creating new programs. Many towns and cities received fairly large amounts of money as a result of the American Rescue Plan, and they need direction on how to spend it. Use your platform to advocate for working people and the assistance they need. Coordinate with local governments to see how you can help them through policies and programs. Additionally, many states have great economic policies, but there aren't many people that know about them. Outreach is crucial to spreading the word about the good policies that your constituents can take advantage of.

- **Implement social program policy wins that come from the federal government.** State legislatures are needed to actually implement social program policy wins that come from the federal government. Coordination and cooperation with advocacy groups will be necessary as budget reconciliation passes through Congress to make sure that policies are implemented correctly locally.

- **Establish or expand workforce policies to allow for greater employee empowerment.** Workers need to have a say in their benefits, more power over changes in the workplace, and greater job quality in the 21st century work environment. Find intersections between employee empowerment, job quality and workforce development when creating policy.

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• **Establish or expand policies that improve worker quality of life.** Establish policies that promote bodily autonomy and stability such as access to healthcare, child care, and expansion of the child tax credit. Other examples include raising wages and paid leave. These measures will bolster our national security because our success as a country is tied directly to the wellness of our citizens.

• **Protect the home and community based services/care economy.** Address fragmentation between state actors and state agencies so that the workforce policies will protect every person who needs it. Encourage local health and human services offices to coordinate with state officials to make sure implementation is smooth and successful.