

10th Anniversary Toast

Recently, I saw a cartoon about our work.
It shows an employer hiring a worker,
He explains the **deal** he has with his workers:

“There’s **no job security**,

But

We don’t expect **loyalty** either.”

Sadly, this **destructive deal**
destroys pride in work
depresses wages
legitimizes **downsizing**
and makes **fear** the motivator

Changing the workplace into a **hostile environment**.

We plucky few have chosen
To oppose this **destructive deal** as our life’s work, and
To make **respect** for workers a **new labor standard**,
So ten years ago, we organized a **network**,

Pitted against the “at-will” rule:

That **frees** an employer from **accountability** for decisions about its
workers;

And promoting its opposite, the “just cause” rule:

That all workers are entitled to **reasoned decisions** about their
careers.

Long after our work is done, we will **happily remember**
Our successes in creating a **productive working environment**.

We have gathered here tonight to celebrate our formation.

But as we do this, **we too** must show **respect** for our **worker/clients**,

Those brave people—

Who **faced** hostile workplaces, **day after working day**,

Who **challenged** the authority of their employers, or

Who **endured** the **bitter pain** of **unjust dismissal—**

These worker/clients of ours have carried **the real burden** of **promoting**
this **just cause** rule.

The **profound changes** they are forcing in the workplace will **never** be
forgotten.

Having acknowledged this **debt** we owe,
It is now **our challenge**,
To **recommit** ourselves to **their unfinished work**
To assure that their **sacrifices** were **not in vain**.

We must each become **stronger sites** in our network,
More **effective** in our practices,
Dependably supporting others in our common work,
And organizing a **politically potent voice** for unorganized workers.

Thus, we will **become** the midwives to the **birth** of the **just cause rule**,
A rule that **banishes autocratic** decisions from our workplaces,
That increases the **job security** and **loyalty** of workers, and
Helps **assure** that labor is done **with the consent** and **for the benefit**
of **the workers**.

And so, let us raise our glasses in a toast to our worker/clients,
Whose courage and perseverance have contributed mightily
To our campaign for the **just cause rule**
And for **respect** as a **new labor standard**.

A TOAST,
To our clients!!