

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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May 11, 2011

Thieu Do
Chairperson, Vietnam Human Rights Day Organizing Committee
4217 Evergreen Lane,
Annandale, VA 22003

Dear Mr. Do:

The AFL-CIO wants to extend its congratulations and greetings to the organizers, sponsors, and participants of the Seventeenth Commemoration of Vietnam Human Rights Day to be held on May 11, 2011, in the Senate Hart Office Building. This important and highly significant annual event in our nation's capital is a testament to your commitment to human rights.

American workers and the AFL-CIO have long stood for human rights and democracy in the United States and throughout the world. Democratic and independent labor unions are an essential part of democracy, here at home and abroad. A worker's right to form a labor union is an essential component of democratic society. The right to form and belong to a labor union is a fundamental human right.

The labor laws and labor practices of all countries should be in accordance with internationally recognized worker rights. It is important for all countries to respect and realize the core labor rights promulgated by the International Labor Organization. It is well established that countries that observe core labor standards can increase efficiency, and promote innovation and higher productivity, thus improving their overall economy. This is also true for Vietnam, where much needs to be done to bring its labor laws and practices in line with internationally recognized worker rights.

The adoption and effective enforcement of internationally recognized worker rights is absolutely necessary if the workers of Vietnam are to reap a fair share of the potential rewards of expanded trade with the United States. Labor laws governing Freedom of Association, the Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively, and Acceptable Conditions of Work should meet international standards in Vietnam, as in all countries. In the modern globalized economy, the effective enforcement of workers' rights according to international standards must be an essential part of trade agreements between nations.

American workers and their unions have had a long relationship of many years with Vietnam and with the Vietnamese-American community here in the United States. We look forward to building upon and strengthening that relationship in future years to the benefit of workers both in Vietnam and in the United States.

We wish you all the best on Vietnam Human Rights day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. Trumka". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Richard L. Trumka
President