A Future of Good Jobs?

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“Although commissioned to honor the Upjohn Institute’s 75th anniversary, A Future of Good Jobs could hardly be better timed with respect to current trends in the American economy. While most of these trends—widening wage inequality, underemployment of the less educated, increased global competition, and cutbacks in health insurance and retirement coverage—are far from new, it is only recently that policymakers and mainstream economists have come to acknowledge that they are not necessarily self-correcting. The practical, concrete remedies offered in this book are especially welcome in that they are sensitive both to the realities of the U.S. labor force and to the needs and resources of U.S. employers.”

– Jodie Allen, Senior Editor, Pew Research Center

“This book provides a readable and highly interesting discussion of some of the key problems facing American workers. The chapters are well-written and the facts are clearly presented. The policy discussions are on-target. I particularly liked the discussion of policies to improve job quality in low-wage jobs; others will be interested in the chapters on immigration, older workers, employer-provided health insurance, or employment and training programs. Any reader who wants to know more about work, jobs, and the economy will find this book useful reading.”

– Rebecca Blank, Henry Carter Adams Collegiate Professor of Public Policy and former Dean of Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan

“Since 1980 American workers with average and below-average skills have received anemic pay gains. Many have seen erosion in crucial employment benefits, including health insurance. The surge in productivity after the mid-1990s gave a temporary boost to wages, but the relief proved short-lived. Workers who are not in the top ranks of the pay distribution have seen meager wage gains in recent years, even when the economy is growing robustly. Timothy Bartik and Susan Houseman have assembled a first-rate team of economists to assess the problems of struggling workers. They offer cogent analyses of America’s workplace problems. More importantly, they provide a timely set of prescriptions to address those problems. Many writers wring their hands at the challenges facing workers who are at the bottom of the pay ladder. The authors of this volume focus on the more difficult task of crafting humane but tough-minded solutions to the problem of shrinking wages. For readers who are interested in clear-eyed analysis as well as shrewd policy advocacy, this book offers an excellent starting place for thinking about solutions to the problem of lousy jobs and lousy pay.”

– Gary Burtless, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, The Brookings Institution
“Leading policy analysts not only frame the major challenges facing U.S. labor policy in this book, but they provide possible solutions. Growing inequality, declining coverage and generosity of employer-sponsored benefits, soaring health insurance costs, less job security, and a sharp decline in the employment of less-educated men are serious problems. The presidential candidates, economic policy analysts, and concerned citizens would do well to study the ideas in this book to prepare for the challenges ahead.”

—Richard A. Hobbie, Executive Director, National Association of State Workforce Agencies

“The middle class is anxious and for good reasons. Recent productivity increases have done little to raise the wages of most workers, health and retirement benefits along with jobs are less secure, and education and training policies have not kept pace with new global challenges. The authors of this volume provide both good diagnosis and some interesting ideas for how the nation should respond.”

—Isabel Sawhill, Senior Fellow, Economic Studies, The Brookings Institution
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