



LABOR DAY



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Labor Day is a time to pay tribute to American workers, their achievements and contributions throughout the years. On June 28, 1894, President Grover Cleveland signed a law declaring Labor Day as a national holiday. Celebrated annually on the first Monday of September, it honors the men and women who fought tirelessly for workers' rights; facing hardships, beatings, imprisonment and even death. Since unions are organized to achieve collective bargaining power, most union conflicts have been motivated primarily by economic issues (wages, working hours, safety conditions, work rules, etc.), and have engaged opponents (employers, hired strikebreakers, replacement workers, local law enforcement) with economic goals in mind.



The law was passed in 1894 and “more than a century later, the true founder of Labor Day has yet to be identified. Many credit Peter J. McGuire, co-founder of the American Federation of Labor, while others have suggested that Matthew Maguire, a secretary of the Central Labor Union, first proposed the holiday.”¹ Both men have led strikes with strong focus on workday hours of the workforce.



“Congress enacted the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) in 1935 to protect the rights of employees and employers, to encourage collective bargaining, and to curtail certain private sector labor and management practices, which can harm the general welfare of workers, businesses and the U.S. economy.”²



On June 20, 1941, Ford Motor Company signed its first contract with the United Automobile Workers of America and Congress of Industrial Organizations (UAW-CIO). The UAW and Ford Motor Company revisit the Agreement every four years to better the relationship between workers and the company. The first Agreement was within one booklet (pictured right) and only 24 pages long. The latest Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) was ratified on October 30, 2019 and is a collection of seven books, spanning over 2,000 pages.



American labor has raised the nation's standard of living and contributed to the greatest production the world has ever known. The labor movement has brought us closer to economic and political democracy. This Labor Day, let's celebrate the voices of past, present and future American workers.

