Working Scared (Or Not at All)

The Lost Decade, Great Recession, and Restoring the Shattered American Dream

Updated Edition

Carl E. Van Horn

Contents

Acknowledgments		X1	
In	troduction	xiii	
1	Working Scared in America and the Great Recession	1	
	The "Hurricane Katrina" of Recessions	4	
	The Sudden Collapse and Painful Aftermath	8	
	Did Unemployed Workers Recover?	11	
	Bleak Outlooks	12	
	A Silent Mental Health Epidemic	13	
	A World of Hurt for the Long-Term Unemployed	14	
	Bitter Legacies	16	
2	Is the American Worker Disposable?	21	
	What Happened to the Employer/Employee Compact?	24	
	Four Forces Downsizing the American Worker	25	
	Globalization and Offshoring	28	
	Mergers, Acquisitions, and Restructuring	31	
	Deindustrialization to Knowledge Economy	32	
	Deunionization	34	
	Education and Training Gaps	37	
	Education Spending P-20	38	
	Job Training Programs for the Unemployed	39	
	Training at Work	39	
	Transforming American Attitudes	43	

viii Contents

3	New American Workplace Realities	49
	Declining Satisfaction at Work	50
	The Work-Family Imbalance	54
	Learning at Work	57
	An Unhealthy Insurance Trend	58
	A Workplace Divided	60
	A Workforce in Transition	65
4	Misery and Bleak Expectations for Older	
	Unemployed Workers	69
	Last Fired, Never Rehired	70
	The Devastating Consequences of Long-Term Unemployment	77
	Ending Retirement as We Knew It	79
	What Older Workers Need	84
	Not So Golden Years	87
5	Unfulfilled Expectations for Recent College and High	
	School Graduates	93
	Hit Hard by the Great Recession	94
	Left Out of the Labor Market	94
	A Disappointing Start for College Graduates	99
	Mountains of Debt	100
	More Grinders Than Slackers	101
	Are High School and College Graduates Prepared for Work?	102
	Employers' Views	106
	Does Education Serve the Needs of Employers? How	
	Much Should It?	109
	Next-Generation Education Reforms	114
6	Unfinished Business: Recovering from the Great Recession	121
	Bold Actions Battle the Financial Crisis	122
	A Painfully Slow Recovery Yields Disappointment	127
	Policy Gridlock	129
	Election-Year Policy and Politics	132
	Frustration and Protest	134
	Digging Out of the Ditch	13'
	Direct Job Creation	137
	Infrastructure and Energy Grid Investments	138
	Public Service Jobs	140
	Bolster and Refocus the Workforce Development System	141
	Shifting to Top Gear	143

Contents	IX	

7	Restoring the Shattered Dreams of American Workers	147	
	A New Workforce Paradigm	149	
	Assumptions, Expectations, and Hopes	151	
	Four National Priorities	155	
	Reform Education to Prepare Students for Careers	155	
	Expand Lifelong Learning Opportunities for Workers	161	
	Replace Unemployment Insurance with		
	Reemployment Insurance	163	
	Establish a Renewed Worker-Employer Compact	167	
	Strengthening Advance Warning of Layoffs and Assistance	167	
	Reinvigorate Workplace Family-Friendly and		
	Flextime Policies	168	
	Restoring Balance and Shared Sacrifice to Achieve		
	Greater Prosperity	168	
Af	terword	175	
Αŗ	ppendix: Work Trends: Americans' Attitudes about Work,		
	Employers, and Government, 1998-2012	189	
Sig	Significant Works		
Inc	lex	201	