

# Clap Back against Worker Inequity. Join Workers and Activists to #ReimagineTheEconomy

Essential workers and labor activists come together to narrate this video, advocating for action to ensure a post-pandemic economy that centers better protections, improved conditions, and fair wages for all workers.

## Transcript begins.

[cheering and clapping]

[A nine-panel grid shows footage from the pandemic: health care workers in protective gear transport a patient, newscasters wearing face masks deliver on-the-scene reports, a marquee sign reads, “School closed. Stay safe and healthy!” A montage follows, interspersing footage of on-the-job grocery clerks, delivery people, hazmat technicians, and other essential workers along with footage of families and other small groups leaning out of windows and gathering on stoops and sidewalks to applaud for the workers.]

At the onset of the pandemic, people around the country cheered for frontline workers, an important public ritual that held us all together during these uncertain times.

[A brass band plays at a street-side food distribution site.]

While there are still many unknowns about the virus itself, the pandemic has revealed that America’s economic system is broken—and has been broken for a long time.

[A montage of footage shows small groups of people at their windows, on porches, and in the street, clapping, banging pots, cheering on workers, and singing: “I just might have a problem that you’ll understand/We all need somebody to lean on.”]

[on-screen text: A message from essential workers and labor activists]

[A nine-panel grid shows a racially mixed cast of essential workers and labor activists, speaking from their homes and workplaces via Zoom. At times they speak individually and at times in unison.]

We are all intertwined, and our broken economy impacts all of us, especially the least powerful.

When we do recover, it cannot be to what we had before. We cannot go back to “normal.” We will not return to that.

We can’t go back to four decades of stagnant wages. Or one-in-four working people in the US without paid sick leave. Or workers having no voice or representation in their

workplaces. We can't go back to gig workers, who make up 33 percent of our economy, being denied basic benefits. Or Black women making 61 cents to every dollar white men make. Or 75 percent of people with disabilities being unemployed, largely because employers do not provide accommodations. We can't go back to 30 percent of domestic workers relying on public assistance for food security. Or undocumented workers lacking access to any benefits at all.

These are the daily challenges so many of us face. These are the daily challenges of "normal."

[At the word "normal," the speakers gesture air quotes.]

All workers are essential, and yet we don't provide so many with the essentials. We cannot return to that. This is the moment to turn this public ritual into action.

Join us and clap back.

Clap back. Clap back. Clap back.

[As the workers and activists say, "Clap back," they give two strong, succinct claps, punctuating their words with this gesture of protest.]

Clap back.

Clap back at this broken economy.

Clap back.

[clap-clap]

Clap back. Clap back. Clap back.

[A montage of footage shows migrant farmworkers harvesting lettuce, factory workers sorting olives, and striking workers and marching protesters chanting, "Fight for 15!" and "Sí se puede!" and bearing signs that read, "We Are Worth More!," "Immigrants Are Essential & Excluded," "UAW on Strike," and "Back the Teachers."]

Clap back. Clap back.

Together we can reimagine and create a new economy that works for everyone, and clap back to ensure that the tens of millions of people who lost their jobs get back to work safely, sustainably, and with a say over their conditions.

Clap back so that workers in low-wage sectors, who are keeping this country alive, have the accommodations, unemployment benefits, health care, sick leave, PPE, job security, and higher pay that all of us deserve.

Clap back, and together we can ensure that all workers, all workers, all workers, everyone, all workers are treated as essential.

Together, let's reimagine the economy. We can create the future we want. Now.

Clap back and guarantee a just future for all workers.

[on-screen text: Share this video]

## **PARTICIPANTS**

[Each participant appears in a Zoom window and claps twice as their name, organization, and work status appears on screen.]

Adrian Haro, The Worker's Lab  
Ai-jen Poo, National Domestic Workers Alliance  
Andrea Dehlendorf, United for Respect  
Anita M. Bailey, Essential Worker & ROC United NYC  
Biju Mathew, New York Taxi Workers Alliance  
Christina Hayes, Essential Worker & Family Values @ Work  
Dessa Cosma, Detroit Disability Power  
Erica Smiley, Jobs With Justice  
Heidi Shierholz, Economic Policy Institute  
Kris Garcia, Essential Worker, Family Values @ Work, 9to5 & Paid Leave for All  
Lakia Graham, Essential Worker  
Lauren Jacobs, Partnership for Working Families  
Lenny Sanchez, Essential Worker & Gig Workers Matter  
Maurice BP-Weeks, Action Center on Race & the Economy (ACRE)  
Michelle Miller, Coworker.org  
Mónica Ramírez, Justice for Migrant Women  
Rebecca Dixon, National Employment Law Project  
Sekou Siby, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United  
Tameka Henry, Essential Worker  
Tekiah Elzey, Essential Worker  
Wendy Chun-Hoon, Family Values @ Work

[on-screen graphic: Ford Foundation logo]

## **CREDITS**

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Jessica Reynolds

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**SPECIAL THANKS**

Sarita Gupta and the Future of Work(ers) team

[on-screen text: To join us and learn more, visit  
[www.fordfoundation.org/workersclapback.](http://www.fordfoundation.org/workersclapback.)]

**End of transcript.**