



The Future We Need: Organizing for a Better Democracy in the Twenty-First Century – Transcript

Hosted by the Aspen Institute Business and Society Program and the Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

Description

The last few years have left the US at a crossroads. Threats to democracy, the prevalence of bad jobs, and the continued battle against discrimination and hate have led some to question whether the American dream, progress toward the promise of equal opportunity, and the Great Experiment of democracy are lost. In the face of these challenges, people are once again turning to organizing. Workers are organizing their workplaces, the young and old are marching for social justice, and business leaders are [proclaiming](#), “We stand for democracy.” Questions remain, however, about what forms of organizing will succeed in addressing the multitude of issues we face.

In their new book, “[The Future We Need: Organizing for a Better Democracy in the Twenty-First Century](#),” authors Erica Smiley and Sarita Gupta argue that collective bargaining can be used to help improve work, help address discrimination, and improve the health of our democracy. Smiley, executive director of Jobs With Justice, and Gupta, the Ford Foundation’s vice president of US programs, “bring a novel perspective to building worker power and what labor organizing could look like in the future, suggesting ways to evolve collective bargaining to match the needs of modern people—not only changing their wages and working conditions, but being able to govern more aspects of their lives.” This virtual book talk with the authors will explore the struggles of work today and explain how new forms of collective bargaining and worker organizing and power can help build a healthy, multiracial democracy with an economy that works for all.

Learn more about this event at [as.pn/organizing](https://aspeninstitute.org/organizing).

Speakers



Sarita Gupta

Vice President, U.S. Programs, Ford Foundation

Sarita Gupta is vice president of U.S. Programs, overseeing the Ford Foundation's domestic work including Civic Engagement and Government, Creativity and Free Expression, Future of Work(ers), Technology and Society, Disability Rights, and Gender, Racial, and Ethnic Justice.

Gupta joined the foundation in 2019 as director of the Future of Work(ers) program, bringing more than two decades of experience working to expand people's ability to take collective action to improve their workplaces, communities, and lives by creating meaningful solutions. She is a nationally recognized expert on the economic, labor, and political issues affecting workers and is widely acknowledged as a key leader and strategist for building coalitions and policies that protect and advance the rights of workers.

As director, she spearheaded the launch of several far-reaching initiatives. At the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, she brought together a number of major funders to launch the Families and Workers Fund, which now stands at \$52 million, and the \$50 million Care for All with Respect and Equity Fund, to address the immediate needs of low-wage workers and their families and drive long-term policy change. Most recently she made a \$25 million grant to support informal workers across the globe for the next five years. She has a long history of working on the national level to break down barriers to economic opportunity for all people, which has been increasingly crucial as the U.S. struggles to rebuild equitably amidst an uneven economic recovery from COVID-19.

Gupta previously served as executive director of Jobs With Justice, a leader in the fight for workers' rights that shapes the public discourse on every front to build power for working people and create an economy that benefits everyone. There, she led a network of more than 30 labor and community coalitions that changed the conversation and moved multiple voices, from labor to faith, into action. She has been on the frontlines of organizing and policy campaigns to boost wages, worker voice, and working conditions for all working people and improve labor and civil rights protections for immigrant men and women. She also played a key role in building numerous campaigns, like the Asia Floor Wage Alliance, a global coalition of trade unions, workers' rights organizations, and human rights organizations pushing for higher wages in the global garment industry, and the United Workers Congress, focused on raising labor standards and protections for low-wage workers across industries.

She was also co-director of Caring Across Generations, a national movement transforming the way America defines care so all families can live well and age with dignity. There, she spearheaded a policy campaign calling for a much-needed care infrastructure to provide high-quality, affordable options for individuals and families, as well as support for family caregivers and the care workforce. The organization was instrumental in paving the way for the Home Care Rule, providing minimum wage and overtime protections for two million home care workers, and most recently it helped establish the first public, state-based, long-term care program in the nation in Washington.

Gupta earned a Bachelor of Arts from Mount Holyoke College, with studies in women, health, and society. She has served on the boards of several organizations, including Restaurant Opportunities Center United, the International Labor Rights Forum, and General Services Foundation. She currently sits on the boards of Labor Network for Sustainability, Institute for Policy Studies, United States Student Association Foundation, All Above All, School of Labor and Urban Studies Foundation at CUNY, and WILL Empower (Women In Labor Leadership). A Hunt Alternatives Fund Prime Movers Fellow and a graduate

of the Rockwood Leadership Training Program, Gupta has received a number of awards and accolades, including the National Women's Law Center Annual Leadership Award, the Francis Perkins Open Door Award, Mount Holyoke College Alumnae Achievement Award, and Corporate Ethics International's BENNY Award.



Erica Smiley

Executive Director, Jobs With Justice

Erica Smiley is the executive director of Jobs With Justice. A longtime organizer and movement leader, Smiley has been spearheading strategic organizing and policy interventions for Jobs With Justice for nearly 15 years. Prior to taking up her current position with the organization, Smiley served as organizing director for Jobs With Justice, developing campaigns that resulted in transformative changes to how working people organize and are civically engaged at their workplaces and in their communities. During her tenure at Jobs With Justice, Smiley has served in numerous leadership capacities including as campaigns director and as senior field organizer for the Southern region.

Serving as one of the lead architects, Smiley has been instrumental in developing the strategic vision of Jobs With Justice to build power for impacted working people through expanding their collective bargaining power as one way to redefine and claim their democracy, while addressing issues of inequality and poverty. This includes founding the Advancing Black Strategists Initiative and co-convening a national strategy for essential workers.

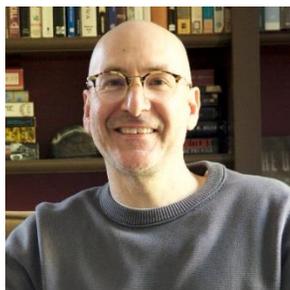
Smiley co-authored "The Future We Need: Organizing for a Better Democracy in the 21st Century" with Sarita Gupta. She has authored several related articles in the New Labor Forum, Dissent Magazine, the Journal on Class, Race and Corporate Power, The Labor Education and Research Association, and other publications lifting strategic organizing, movement building, direct action, and discourse as core strategies for advancing work in this arena. As one of the few queer black women leaders in the labor movement, Smiley has helped to seed numerous initiatives that position and prioritize the demands and voices of vulnerable working people in socioeconomic and political decisions that directly and indirectly impact their individual lives, families, and communities. As a seasoned organizer she has been a vocal advocate for mobilizing our movements to be aligned around a common agenda for working families.

Prior to joining Jobs With Justice, Smiley organized with community groups and unions such as the Tenants and Workers Support Committee (now Tenants and Workers United) in Virginia and SEIU Local 500 in Baltimore. Her career in social and economic justice began in the reproductive justice field, serving as national field director for Choice USA (now United for Reproductive and Gender Equity—URGE) where she received the Young Women of Achievement Award in 2004.

Her passion for advancing innovations that prioritize the South is evident on the boards she serves on today and in the past, which includes the board of the Highlander Research and Education Center, based in Tennessee, a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South and the leadership council of the Workers Defense Project based in Texas. She is on the board of the SEIU Education and Support Fund and the Workers Lab, and she participates in the Bargaining for the Common Good advisory committee. In 2019, Smiley was named Women in Labor Leadership Empower Fellow with Rutgers.

Smiley is originally from Greensboro, North Carolina, where she is a proud product of public schools—ultimately graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She currently resides in New Jersey alongside her partner, Amanda, and their daughter.

Moderator



Rick Wartzman

Head of the KH Moon Center for a Functioning Society

Rick Wartzman is head of the KH Moon Center for a Functioning Society at the Drucker Institute, a part of Claremont Graduate University. His commentary for Fast Company was recognized by the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing with its Best in Business award for 2018. He has also written for Fortune, Time, Businessweek, and many other publications. He is the author of five books including “The End of Loyalty: The Rise and Fall of Good Jobs in America,” which was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in Current Interest and named one of the best books of 2017 by strategy+business.

About Us

About the Business and Society Program

The Aspen Institute Business and Society Program works with business executives and scholars to align business decisions and investments with the long-term health of society—and the planet. Through carefully designed networks, working groups and focused dialogue, the Program identifies and inspires thought leaders and “intrapreneurs” to challenge conventional ideas about capitalism and markets, to test new measures of business success and to connect classroom theory and business practice. [Learn more.](#)

About the Economic Opportunities Program

The Aspen Institute Economic Opportunities Program advances strategies, policies, and ideas to help low- and moderate-income people thrive in a changing economy. We recognize that race, gender, and place intersect with and intensify the challenge of economic inequality and we address these dynamics by advancing an inclusive vision of economic justice. For over 25 years, EOP has focused on expanding individuals' opportunities to connect to quality work, start businesses, and build economic stability that provides the freedom to pursue opportunity. [Learn more.](#)

Opportunity in America

The Economic Opportunities Program's [Opportunity in America](#) discussion series has moved to an all-virtual format as we all do what we can to slow the spread of COVID-19. But the conversations about the changing landscape of economic opportunity in the US and implications for individuals, families, and communities across the country remain vitally important. We hope you will participate as we bring our discussions to you in virtual formats, and we look forward to your feedback.

We are grateful to Prudential Financial, Walmart, the Surdna Foundation, the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Bloomberg, and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth for their support of this series.

Transcript

Maureen Conway (00:00:00)

Good afternoon and welcome. I'm Maureen Conway. I'm a vice president at the Aspen Institute and executive director of the Economic Opportunities Program, and I am delighted to welcome you to today's conversation, "The Future We Need: Organizing for a Better Democracy in the Twenty-First Century." We're delighted to be hosting this conversation today with our colleagues in the Business and Society Program, and let me give a special thanks to my colleague, Miguel Padro, who was my partner in helping me pull today's conversation together. So today, we will be discussing this book right here, "The Future We Need," which could not be more timely as we think about the issues of worker power we are seeing today, as well as the issues of fragile democracies and how we think about that. So well done, Sarita and Smiley, in terms of timing your book release, because it's a terrific book that I highly recommend.

So I'm not going to do long introductions of them. You'll hear from them soon and you can read their bios on our website. They're amazing. They have amazing experience and they're the perfect people to have written this book. We're also joined today by Rick Wartzman, who I'll say more about in a minute, who'll be moderating the conversation. This conversation is part of the Economic Opportunities Program's ongoing "Opportunity in America" discussion series, in which we explore the changing landscape of economic opportunity in the United States, the implications for workers and communities, and ideas, policies, and strategies for change. We're very grateful to Prudential Financial, Walmart, the Surdna foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Bloomberg, and the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth for their support of the Opportunity in America discussion series. And this book talk is actually a nice interlude in a mini-series we've been having on the History and Future of U.S. Labor Law.

And so I just want to take a moment to say we have two other conversations coming up in that series. I hope you can just join us for those in April. On April 27th, we'll be talking about "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act: Fulfilling the Promise of Equal Opportunity," and on May 4th, we'll have an event on "The Occupational Safety and Health Act: The Past and Future of Workers' Well-Being." So please do join us for those, which I think really dovetail nicely with the many of the themes in this book in terms of how we think about our laws and our democracy and how we think about representing workers. So just so many intersections and really great that we're having this conversation today. Before we begin, just a quick review of the technology. All attendees are muted. We very, very much welcome your questions. Please use the Slido box on the right side of your screen for questions and comments. Questions can be submitted and uploaded through the Q&A tab.

We also know we have an incredibly knowledgeable and expert audience. So if you have ideas, examples, resources, or other things related to today's topic, please do share those in our Ideas tab. That's also in the Slido box. And finally, we always appreciate your feedback. There is a short survey that we would really love for you to fill out before you leave, and you'll find that in the Polls tab in the Slido box. We're delighted to have everyone participating in today's event. Thank you to many of you who submitted questions in advance. We'll try to get to as many questions as we can, both the ones submitted in advance and the ones you submit today through the Q&A. We also encourage you to tweet about the conversation. Our hashtag is #talkopportunity. If you have any technical issues during the webinar, please message us in the chat or email us at eop.program@aspeninstitute.org.

The webinar is being recorded and will be shared via email and posted on our website, and closed captions should be available for this discussion. Click the "CC" button at the bottom of the video to activate. Okay. So now I will just quickly introduce our moderator for today. Rick Wartzman is head of the KH Moon Center for a Functioning Society at the Drucker Institute. He has written for Fast Company, Fortune, Time, Businessweek, and many other publications. He's the author of four books, including most

recently “The End of Loyalty: The Rise and Fall of Good Jobs in America,” and he has a forthcoming book this fall looking at low-wage work and the issues of low-wage work through the prism of the experience of Walmart and the investments they've been making in their frontline workforce. So he's very informed both from a business perspective and from thinking about the issues facing workers' perspective. He sees it from both sides. So he's a really informed moderator for this conversation, and we are so grateful, Rick, that you have joined us and let me turn it over to you. Thank you.

Rick Wartzman (00:05:36)

All right. Well, thanks so much. And I know we've got a really large audience, which is exciting and great. I know we're in for a great conversation. So yeah, Smiley and Sarita, thank you. How're you guys doing?

Erica Smiley (00:05:49)

Great. It's great to be here. It's a sunny day. I'll take it all day.

Rick Wartzman (00:05:53)

Good deal. And you guys have been out stumping, right? Been on the book tour and so have done a few of these.

Sarita Gupta (00:06:00)

Yeah, yeah, we have. It's great to be here and Rick, so glad to be in conversation with you in particular. So thanks.

Erica Smiley (00:06:00)

Absolutely.

Rick Wartzman (00:06:06)

Thank you. Thank you. I won't do a lot of throat clearing here except to say that I really enjoyed the book, and I learned a lot from the book. So the future we need, to me, we really do need a different future. So it was a pleasure to read your words and your experience, your deep experience in these subjects really inform the work. And anyway, we'll get into it. And I will leave time, as Maureen said, for audience questions. Some were submitted in advance, and we'll get some more through the chat. So please feel free if you're in the audience to go ahead and offer your questions. It would be a lousy program on democracy if I didn't get to your questions. So I will do my best to do that.

Erica Smiley (00:06:53)

Well said, Rick. Well said.

Rick Wartzman (00:06:56)

One of the things I really liked about the book and admired about the book was the way you don't mince words. You say it like it needs to be said and you do that right from the opening pages where you declare the prevailing political economy of the United States and much of the world is based on principles originally espoused by Southern slave owners. The paternalistic view that they knew what was best for their enslaved workers and that their Liberty as individual land owners outweighed the rights of the working women and men who they claim to own. So I'm wondering, this is obviously our sorted horrific foundation as a country. How do you see this manifest in the workplace and in the broader economy today? Those are heavy, heavy words.

Erica Smiley (00:07:49)

Yeah. If it's okay, I'll jump in and then-

Rick Wartzman (00:07:52)

Yeah. Please.

Erica Smiley (00:07:53)

I feel like there's so much... First of all, I'm so glad you said that you appreciate that we don't mince words because it's not always easy to try to translate things in a way that everyone can understand and digest. So I really appreciate that. As a Black Southerner, I didn't grow up where there were a ton of unions. I didn't come from a so-called union family. North Carolina, where I'm from, is one of the lowest union debt states in the country, but at the same time, when I saw people come together and fight collectively for things, I saw them win. For me, part of the theory that I never understood and maybe came to really grapple with later in life was this understanding of why we had so many people who wanted the ability to be in decision making, who wanted the ability to vote, or to be able to set standards at their workplace, and yet had so many barriers to being able to do that in our state.

And it became very clear that a lot of the political economy of the south, particularly before the Civil War had been allowed to continue, and that we didn't articulate this framing of going back to this reconstruction era and even this idea of the political economy of the South is something that's supposed to be negative. I don't know that we were built completely on a cracked foundation. I actually think the aspiration for multiracial democracy was really strong and that in the period of reconstruction, that we were really looking in that direction with the different amendments, the 13th Amendment to allow us to actually control our labor, the 14th Amendment, the finding citizenship, 15th Amendment, defining who could vote, that we were kind of on this path, but that some of the compromises made along the way allowed the ideas of the Confederacy to stay. And while the physical fighting of the Civil War ended, the battle of ideas has continued to this day and in fact, Dixie's winning.

So this idea that we can't actually change and build democracy in the nation without addressing democracy in the South isn't just like a nice quote from W.E.B. Du Bois, but actually a strategic necessity that if we allow the ideas of states' rights over some kind of collective national system, if we allow the idea that employers should paternalistic decide what's best for their workers, just as plantation owners once did, that individual liberty is more important than collective good and democracy, then we'll keep losing. It's that simple.

So we felt it important to put that front and center because we wanted to be really clear that this wasn't just another book about workers' rights. But was actually a book that we hope would help us understand and begin to clarify the path to get us back to building a multiracial democracy and that the workers who are in motion in this period of time are not simply in motion because they want their own individual freedoms and respect they do, but that it's also that these workers are on the front line of trying to preserve and expand the aspirations of our ancestors who wanted to build a democracy in the U.S.

Rick Wartzman (00:11:32)

No, that's great. That makes me think, Sarita, I'm curious your thoughts on this, but when I read that and hearing you now, it really gets down to some really practical, tactical things, right? Who was left out of the National Labor Relations Act? And the threads that has all the way to today when we talk about essential workers. Right? Anyway, Sarita, curious your take on that.

Sarita Gupta (00:11:57)

Absolutely, Rick. I was just about to pick up on that point that the way that we see it manifest today is in fact the continued exclusions of many workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers, who aren't even covered under the Fair Labor Standard Act, let alone the National Labor Relations Act. So they don't have the right to collectively bargain, but we also see it in the form of the tipped wage and the legacy and history of the tipped wage being one where, again, there were set of workers who the history is these were mostly black workers who did not need a wage, and if you felt the need to, if you wanted to tip them, you could tip them and people forget that part of the history that there are still people today who still only make \$2.13 an hour and depend on tips, right?

So these legacies have continued. And then of course, as we're having this conversation about the gig economy and gig workers, the other day, someone asked me what keeps me up at night? What keeps me up at night is that we may very well be on a path where we could come up with a whole new set of exclusions for a set of workers based on how they're classified or not, that will mean millions of workers are also excluded from these kinds of labor protections. So all of that is what we see. And the only other thing I would add, Rick, is just by way of my background. I grew up in Kodak City in Rochester, New York. And I grew up right in the midst of the first round of downsizing that Kodak was going through in the '80s and really watched the devastation of job loss.

And this was a company that had a very paternalistic view of its workers. Georgie Smith was like, "I will take care of my employees." And in fact, he did for many years until the company could no longer take care of the workers and the workers had no union, no collective bargaining and lost so much. And it was so devastating for not only those workers, but the whole community that I grew up in. So when you talk about people feeling left behind, people feel deeply left behind by employers, by policymakers and much today. So this is how it's manifesting, this notion that somehow someone else will take care of workers versus workers themselves having the ability to participate in a democratic process, be able to collectively join together and negotiate for their needs. That is what the book is really highlighting, is that actually it is about power, and workers need power in our economy today.

Rick Wartzman (00:14:45)

I'm curious hearing that, I think it would be great for you all to maybe frame... I know we have a really knowledgeable audience, but even for folks who are in this world, how do you think about the scale of those left behind? In other words, if the labor force is 160 million or so, what percentage do you feel like

are in various ways feeling in that position that you just said? Because it's not a small... This is not like an outlier problem, is what I'm trying to get to.

Erica Smiley (00:15:16)

No, not at all. I mean, we imagine that the number of people in the country who have a union membership are, let's say, so it's what? 6.7% in the private sector, maybe gets up to 10 or 11 if you include the public sector, and then for being super generous about it, right? We can include, let's say another... I'm going to be super liberal. Right? 5% are organized in some other type of organization, be it a worker center or community organization or something. Right? So that still leaves somewhere between 80 and 90% of the country that doesn't have access to some form of decision making or governance, or even a pathway to practicing democracy. I mean, there's a reason why unions have been historically called schools of democracy is because it's a place where we can actually practice decision making.

One of the things I really love from Allison and Heather in the book from the West Virginia teachers is they talk about the institution. Right? Because we like to talk about some of these big ideas like they just happen in a bubble, but they really require some kind of container, some kind of organization and some kind of union. Right? And they were not... Just like you said, we didn't mince words. They didn't mince words about how messy that process is, and you've got to consult to confer, and you've got different opinions, but when a decision is made and people then stick to the collective decision, the power in that, there's something about learning how to do that again, even to know that you should then have the ability to do it in other places. And again, from their story, this idea that after they were able to engage in that process very intentionally and thoughtfully during the actions that they had, right?

In 2018 where they were beginning to fight over the data surveillance of the state's healthcare program and the apps that they all had to download to track their personal and private information, that after that experience and after winning, so many of the members in their union locals who had not been active, all of a sudden were coming to meetings, wanted to now figure out how to get more active civically just in like different political questions or school board or whatever that all of a sudden, they had the will and the desire, or even maybe just the imagination to think that they could be a part of the democratic decision making process.

Rick Wartzman (00:17:45)

Really interesting. So look, this really is the book central point in a way, right? Is that worksite-based collective bargaining while obviously critical and what you all been involved with in many ways is not the only important form of collective bargaining, right? You make clear that this is a powerful practice that people can use to transform the ways in which their school districts, what their new neighborhoods, their healthcare systems, their cities and so on behave. But I want to stick on the work site for a second here because as Maureen mentioned, we really are in this incredible moment, I think, and I, myself am trying to puzzle it out and I'm curious what you think, right? So on the one hand, we have some making the argument that I think largely to a tight pandemic labor market, we haven't seen this much worker power across the economy in a long time, right?

We had strike activity rise last fall so much that the media started calling it Striketober. Unions have notched some inspiring wins, if not massive in the scheme of things at Starbucks now and JFK and Amazon. The Biden NLRB is making some important changes and there's more that seem to be in the offing here, which is great in terms of how labor law is interpreted and enforced all to the good, in my mind. On the other hand, right? We've had no real, I don't think, structural change, right? The PRO Act hasn't passed. There hasn't been an enactment of a Harvard Law Schools clean slate for worker power

that would really get us to sectoral bargaining and really new forms of worker power. Anti-union employers continue to you hold on and we see even at places that have been organized, do everything they can to continue to beat back labor.

And in fact, for all the action that's happened, the percentage of private sector workers holding a union card actually fell in 2021. It was down to 6.1%, I believe. So where do you all see it? And Sarita, maybe I'll start with. Is the glass half full? Is it half empty? Is it something more than that? Something less than that? Where are we?

Sarita Gupta (00:20:00)

Yeah, yeah. Thanks for that question, Rick. I actually believe the glass is half full and I do because... And this is the privilege of where I sit and where Smiley has sat at Jobs With Justice, where we really have worked across... We've always been able to work at the cutting edge, if you will, of the worker movement and labor movement, and really work alongside unions, as well as worker centers and worker advocates and community partners in really smart, powerful way. So we get to see some of these innovations as we've outlined in the book. So the reason I say half cup full is because I think what we're actually seeing is first of all, a huge cultural moment. So I just want to like put the backdrop of a huge cultural moment where workers are actually... I mean, some have termed this, the great resignation this moment, right?

And yes, it's true that there are many workers who have resigned from their jobs, they're not leaving the labor force, but there are leaving their jobs to seek better jobs that will give them the supports that they need. But in addition to that, there's a lot of workers who are saying, "Actually, I'm going to stay in my workplace and I'm going to organize." So that's what we see with Starbucks. That's what we're seeing with Amazon. That's what we're seeing with digital workers at The New York Times. That's what we've seen and it's happening across the economy, which I think is really important to name. It's not just the low age sectors where we see workers in motion right now, it is happening across the economy. And what's happening is essential workers, many workers coming out of the pandemic or in the midst of the pandemic, since we're not totally out of the pandemic, but are actually asking themselves really hard questions like, "Is risking my life and my health and welfare worth this job? Are the wages good enough? Do I see a career pathway? Is this really..."

And what is the purpose of work in the first place?" And I think that cultural opening that we're having as businesses are transitioning to hybrid workplaces or remote workplaces, the debates and discussion right now create an enormous opening for us to redesign and reimagine the kinds of protections that we need in this moment, because people are... It's being widely felt in a way that I don't think we have experienced in recent decades, right? So one is cultural moment. The last Gallup Poll showed an approval of 62% of the public approves of unions, right? If they could have access to it. So that just requires a multifaceted strategy and that's what we see happening right now. Everything from what you named, the legislative change and proposals, and yes, they're stuck and they're moving, but we need policy change and legislative fixes for sure.

New policies that actually speak to the pain points that workers are struggling with today, including the care infrastructure, which is amazing that people are talking about the care economy in a serious way, but also approaches to organizing, and that gives me a lot of hope. We talk in the book about bargaining for the common good, and the many ways in which unions are partnering with community partners and organizing as whole people to actually create change. That is structural change around how we think about funding education to much more. And then of course, we're seeing this evolution of partnerships. For years at Jobs With Justice, we worked with worker centers and labor. I started the first day labor center in Chicago and back then, it wasn't great in the labor movement to be building a worker center, and then over the years we saw partnerships build, which were really amazing.

But now we're seeing an evolution of those partnerships, one from just solidarity to solidarity plus strategic alignment in sectors. All of that, the culmination of all those things actually gives me a lot of hope, because we are seeing wins along the way and we're seeing more people activated and mobilized along the way. And now the big leap we're making, Smiley and I, through this book is that we have to link this work to the bigger question, our democracy and how this really helps us build a healthier democracy in the long run. So that's where I'm at. I don't know, Smiley, what you would add or...

Rick Wartzman (00:24:31)

Smiley, are you more depressed than she is?

Erica Smiley (00:24:34)

No, no, no. I'm with Sarita on the glass half full.

Rick Wartzman (00:24:38)

Good.

Erica Smiley (00:24:38)

I think though so even how you frame the question though, right? I want to... There's something we say in our book that is actually countered to this idea that workers have some new power. That the pandemic gave workers power. It didn't. It exposed existing power. One of the fundamental things we say very early on in the book is that power doesn't go away. It just shifts. It might move to a different sector of the economy or a different location. There's always some level of power in the things that we're producing and just in this technological age, we're producing very different types of things than we were in say 1935 when the Wagner Act first passed. I want to be clear about that because the pandemic did a really good job in exposing workers who perhaps were seen publicly as simply in low wage sectors and very poor as actually playing a very powerful role in the economy being essential.

In fact, to the running of much of the economy and as a part of the Always Essential campaign, we were able to partner with a lot of organizations to really think through how should we test some of the approaches coming out of Harvard clean slate, right? What would it look like to set up governance, maybe not in the Department of Labor, but maybe in the Department of Public Health or some other channel for crisis management? And we were actually successful in doing that in Harris County, Texas at the end of last year where they now have an essential worker standards board that is decision making. That is not simply an advisory body, but helps to make decisions and essentially prepare for crises before they come, not just public health crises, but also of climate disasters and other instances where workers are called in as essential and have to risk their lives for us.

The other thing that I know I'm excited about in this particular moment is the legislation in California, the Fast Act, which is kind of the beginnings of a sectoral approach and sectoral governance for workers in the fast-food sector would be incredible and would expand on some of the existing platforms we have, like the wage boards in New York and some of the other experiences we've tried in places or even build on our own unique American sectoral strategies. We had DeMaurice Smith, president or executive director of the NFL Players Association write the foreword. And I mean, you look at a lot of the athletic negotiations, they're sectoral agreements. They negotiate with the league and each of the team franchises essentially goes along with that agreement and it's enforceable and binding in that way.

So I think beginning to build on our own history and not assuming that these proposals are so radical that we have to go to Europe and other parts of the world, but that we actually have practices right here that we can build on to expand governance, which is really the point. Right? So when we think about structural change, whatever it looks like, we want to make sure that there is an enforceable agreement because really like collective bargain agreement, it's just a policy for a workplace, right? So we want to make sure it's an enforceable legal agreement that can be negotiated and renegotiated as things change, that can be enforced by the directly impacted people and workers and stakeholders that have to adhere to it. That's what democracy is. So some of these other channels that would be created either through sectoral approaches or community-driven approaches like in Harris County are actually key to that.

And then the last thing I want to say to this, because I think it'll relate to some of the other discussion, right? So we quote Beverly Silver a lot when we talk about power, right? So certainly in 1935, when we looked at the power in production, we really looked to our manufacturing sector and we make it auto and steel and the industrial unions. Right? I mean, and they were talking about industrial democracy, right? They weren't just talking about collective bargaining. They were talking about industrial democracy at that time. And now we're in a very similar moment. We're talking about economic democracy and thinking about it in the context of some of the sectors where production happens today, which a lot of it is through the platform economy, which the platforms themselves are new, like Uber and Lyft, but the theory behind it and how they run is the same as it's always been. They're producing data. They're producing different things.

And so the power that workers in those sectors have is actually very similar to the power that workers say in manufacturing might have had right in 1935. Or likewise, when you look at the transportation of goods and items, the power that the longshoremen may have had early and still have, frankly in many places, is also in the case of the last mile delivery drivers or DoorDash drivers who are delivering things for us. So again, the power itself hasn't gone away or increased or decreased, but it's shifted to different sectors, and it's really on us as movement leaders to see that for what it is, not a new economy, not just the future of work in this amorphous way. And this is the intervention that [inaudible 00:29:50] has made her own in her new role, but actually the shifts, the changing nature of work and where power now exists and how to leverage it.

Rick Wartzman (00:30:01)

Yeah. That's great. It's a great picture. I started flashing on Walter Reuther and all the work that he did at the auto workers. We really connected movement to movement. Right? And it was really, really profound. Right? He was a civil rights leader. He wasn't just a union leader and so on. So yeah. Really, really powerful.

Erica Smiley (00:30:22)

That's right. And just to add on that really quick, Rick, because I'm glad you brought up Reuther in the UAW, right? Because so they had this incredible base of Black workers who were in some ways, in this paternalistic position, like Henry Ford, just like some of the old plantation owners, right? Was like, "I'm your great savior here, right? I'm going to employ you and no one else will and even though I'm not going to give you all the same rights, I'm going to be your hero. I know what's best for you." And the union wasn't even paying attention to that, and they were losing in Ford, at Dodge, at General Motors. Right? So you've got these Black workers who agitate the union who are saying, "Look, you can't win without centering the fight for equality. You can't win without fighting white supremacy. And you'll always be able to peel off people. Ford will always be able to peel people off if you don't do this."

And they began to do it, and not only did they win and build one of the big locals that still exist with Local 600, but that they created a whole new set of leaders from the plant who then went on to organize the community struggles like in the Harriet Tubman housing projects and those things. It's critical to think about these struggles and Reuther's a great example. That's also the union that Mitt Romney's dad over this question of whether or not they can negotiate over prices as well as wages. So when we're talking about bargaining for the common good, it's not that Sarita and I are projecting all these brand new strategies as if we just are the first to think of them or that our generation is the first to test them, but really trying to package them based on where power and the economy and the nature of work has shifted in thinking about them in that context.

Rick Wartzman (00:32:08)

Yeah. No, that's great stuff. And yeah, the history of drum and those that kind of Black auto workers is so powerful. For those in the audience, not familiar, it's really worth exploring and reimagining in the context of today. It's just as Smiley said. I think it's rich, rich stuff. Let me stay in the workplace and I'm watching the time and want to get to the audience questions, but I want to stay on one other workplace question and then pivot into the kind of connections between workplace and you've already hit on this and other avenues for democracy and organizing. But one of the things I'm always puzzled about and I'm curious your takes, so one of the richest parts of the book, I think you have these worker profiles and organizer and activist profiles laced throughout the book.

They're really oral histories with them and they're wonderful. And there's a Smithfield Foods Processing Plant worker, right? Named Lidia Victoria. And one of the things I really struck me in reading what she said is after she went through the really arduous task of organizing the plant, she said that now workers in management actually come together, not just to negotiate at the table, but to solve operational problems. And she said the people closest to the work really are the best to spot problems and propose solutions. She said, "When I hear about something, I ask other workers if they're experiencing the same thing, and then we come up with a solution together with the company."

Why is it so hard for employers to turn to worker voice in actual, everyday decision making when there would seem to be kind of implicit in her right statement is that there's an ROI for the employer? We can actually fix the problem. So why don't we seem more of that given that there are a lot of case studies, many by The Aspen Institute and others? We know this works. So why is it so hard to get worker participation in day-to-day decision making?

Sarita Gupta (00:34:14)

Yeah. Well, I'm happy to start here and just say, well, because I think there's too many employers who still view labor as just simply a cost versus labor as a real stakeholder in the business and in the business model. And I'm always amazed at how people really underestimate workers want their jobs to improve, but they want their companies to be successful too. It's attached to their livelihoods, but somehow, they're treated like they are only a cost and that their own in their interest is only about their own wages and working conditions versus the ideas they have to really improve the business itself, the business model itself, the product, et cetera. In addition to Lydia one of the other workers that we profiled worker leaders was a man named Jeff Crosby. And Jeff worked at GE plant for 33 years. And in his profile, he talks about his experience in 1982 when GE decided to open the factory of the future.

Rick Wartzman (00:35:23)

The factory of the future. Yeah.

Sarita Gupta (00:35:25)

42 million into buying these old buildings. And they had a union and the union said to them, "Listen, this is not going to work. Your super automation is not going to work. It's going to be inflexible. It's not going to work. And at the end of the day, it'll create few skilled jobs, right? But there's a 24-hour operation needed and you're going to have all kinds of issues with shifts." And they shared like, "This is why this is not going to work. Why don't you instead do Island production?" Which was this idea of workers getting skilled at multiple roles and being able to follow the parts as you go along, and it creates more flexibility. So not to get into the weeds, but I was fascinated talking to Jeff about this because what he shared is the company just didn't listen to them.

And of course, the factory of the future failed, millions of dollars got lost, and then over time though, the company came around to this idea of having what they now call special machinists, which was the original idea that the union had come up with. And because they have power in the workplace, they were able to negotiate a new classification and have the wage standards in place and the whole bit, but it was such a fascinating story of once again, this example of where workers on the front lines who know best are not being asked their thoughts on the design. It's not happening. I want to be clear. There are some employers who are getting better at this, and certainly involving employees. My job at the Ford Foundation, we actually just did a whole project looking at the introduction of new technologies and implementation of new technologies and workplaces.

And we really were like, "Can employers bring frontline employees together and really develop and design technologies in this way?" And we have a report coming out soon, but to your point, Rick, there are many reports that demonstrate actually this works. But I think the number one reason it doesn't is because labor is still just seen as a cost versus really valued as a true stakeholder around the table and until businesses figure this out, we will continue to see not only bad decisions get made that hurt employees, but it hurts in terms of the product and services. And Smiley and I often talk about just looking at the example of COVID, in Connecticut, there was a study done of nursing home where it was a unionized facility where the death rate of the patients was so much lower than what you were seeing in the area in non-union facilities. And that was about workers being able to speak up and design together with management what was needed. But that's the reason that I hold is I think why it's so hard to make the business case.

Rick Wartzman (00:38:28)

Yeah. Smiley, did you want to add anything there?

Erica Smiley (00:38:30)

Yeah. I mean, Sarita said a lot of it. I'll just add one very quick thing, and it was 30%, by the way. 30% less deaths in where unions had some form of decision making. So it's not just better for the company, but also better just for us, for some people, for our livelihoods or just living in general. The only addition I would say for Sarita is just that this trend happened intentionally from people, right? So there was a moment in time when business schools actually trained people how to manage people and they trained on all the different stakeholders of a business from shareholders to workers, to the community were part of. They were a part of the community in many ways and had a responsibility as a company when you were granted that license or that certification.

And there was an industry, and Lane Windham has a fantastic articulation of this in her book in "Knocking on Labor's Door." There's an industry that came to be that changed that and that really had strong implications on what was taught. So people went from managing people to managing capital and to managing finances in a way that didn't share the same philosophy. So like Sarita said, then

workers and labor and unions in particular were seen as a liability, more so than a stakeholder. And we all know what stakeholders and just like I said, democracy's messy. It's not like you always agree, but that the point isn't to always agree. The point is to have enough consultation and discernment together to actually come up with solutions that would be best for everyone.

So I think that would probably be the only addition and I'm excited for some of the experiments that many people who I know are watching this are thinking about to shift that in a number of business schools because I think the incoming students in those schools have an appetite for what it would mean to embrace employee activism or embrace some level of decision making that doesn't automatically assume that an organized labor force is a threat.

Rick Wartzman (00:40:46)

Yeah. No, that's great. I'm going to add one more, which is just quickly, which I think it is a lot of employers still see workers as a cost only, but I also think there's a lot of self-delusion. I think that we have our system of we do pulse surveys all the time and we're getting worker feedback and we have an open-door policy, that those things are often. I actually think they convince themselves that they really... "Oh, there's plenty of opportunity for worker voice and we listen to workers," but it's all through a filter they've designed that it doesn't work.

Erica Smiley (00:41:21)

And it's back to this fundamental battle of ideas, right? Am I your paternalistic, have your interest at mind, come to me as like your father figure to talk through things, or am I able to see myself as an equal?

Rick Wartzman (00:41:35)

That's right.

Erica Smiley (00:41:35)

And that may not always agree, but that can have real conversations and certain things in real time. That's right.

Rick Wartzman (00:41:42)

Yeah. Let me pivot if I can. And we've touched on a bunch of this, but really what is the central thread of the book? "Improving workers' lives on the job," you write, "cannot be separated from improving their lives when off work. They have a stake in their ability to come together collectively not only as employees, but also in the myriad other ways, working people play a role in the economy, such as account holders and banking and finance, consumers, renters, and debtors. As a natural consequence," you write, "some of the most successful worker organizing in recent years has occurred at the intersection of several identities, not just within the single identity of worker or employee." It's really fascinating. So can you each quickly give me a good example of we're acting collectively on and off the job at this intersection of several identities, if you will, has come together to drive real change.

Erica Smiley (00:42:40)

I'll just do two just off top. Your questions are so good, Rick. Okay. First of all, the West Virginia teachers, right? So a lot of people saw that action as just around healthcare and wages. People projected as just, like, a straight union fight. Meanwhile, teachers in West Virginia don't actually have the legal right to collectively bargain. Right? And the thing that motivated so many of them was the fact that they were being asked to put in their private data all the way down to their underwear size into this app. And so it was like a data surveillance where their private data was going to be used either against their will or without compensation to justify decreases in their healthcare. And the three counties that went out first, that walked out first in the statewide action were three of, if you look at just the political map, the most conservative counties in the state, but if you look at it from a map of their relationship to democracy and their history with labor activism and standing up for their rights, were perhaps the Vanguard or Mingo County, Wyoming County. Right?

So that's one of my favorite fights because, and Allison and Heather will say this, even though they're from two of the more central counties, will say that they were acting on behalf of the institution, on behalf of students, on behalf of democracy. What they saw was a potential spiral into not only data surveillance, but more privatization and things that were not going to be helpful for students, many of whom were facing the opioid epidemic and crisis. I mean, one of the stories from a teacher who wasn't one of the profiles, but was certainly quoted in the book where she talks about that her partner, her husband worked for EMT and they would get a note every morning, like a text. I can't remember what the exact coding was, but basically warning them of children whose parents had either overdosed or were not at the home anymore so that they could figure out wraparound services for them so they could stay in school, or literally buying a child a pillow so he had his own pillow at night and letting him nap during the day.

These kind of extreme cases that maybe some of us get to watch during sitcoms like Abbott Elementary are real life experiences of many teachers. So they saw themselves as fighting for, I think Allison called it the republic for the institution. And then really quickly the other example, Rick, I mean, which I think is on a lot of our minds right now is that we watch Amazon workers vote for a union in many places in New York and in Alabama, this understanding that at the very least, two of some of the most prominent leaders, so certainly Chris Smalls and then Big Mike down in Alabama had been very outspoken about the fact that they were mobilized and radicalized through the movement for Black lives.

And they had a moment where each of them were like, "The company's putting out all this stuff on Black Lives Matter saying they support Black lives and yet aren't providing the appropriate equipment, aren't paying us fairly, aren't listening to us, are using police to surveil us at disproportionate rates, particularly at the majority Black plants like investment." So that is a real key indicator for labor leaders to understand what are the motivating qualities? What are the things that get people to stick their necks out to think that they should have a say? And that is not just something that's like, "I'm going to support over here as an ally," but something that actually is the identity around what gets workers in motion and to think that they should have the ability to have a say at the table. And as we all know, many of those workers won.

I mean, even in the case in Alabama where the election is too close to call and workers are currently down, they came so much closer than anyone ever imagined they would and they're still challenge ballots. I mean, they still have a shot at this thing. And of course, with the OAU winning in Staten Island to everyone's surprise. This is yet another example of when you actually center these struggles, when you center the whole person, the whole identity of working people, you win and you win in ways that are profound and you win in ways that win for everyone, not just the set of workers in any particular site.

Sarita Gupta (00:42:40)

Yeah.

Rick Wartzman (00:47:01)

That's great. Yeah. Sarita?

Sarita Gupta (00:47:02)

I would just add in addition to those great examples, I want to bring in examples from the care economy because I think that's the other arena where we see really interesting work happening where you have domestic workers, again, workers who've been excluded from labor protections who are nannies, house cleaners, elder care providers who are really... I was lucky enough in my former career to be a part of the Caring Across Generations campaign, co-founding that with the Domestic Workers Alliance and really lifting up the importance of identifying and understanding that workers needed to come together with families and individuals and together, we should be advocating for a whole new care structure and one that really meets the needs of people across the continuum of care from childcare to elder care and the needs. So affordability was a big piece of it, access to supports for working families and family caregivers and the workforce, the quality of those jobs, but what was really important in those efforts is that workers weren't just workers. Workers were also people who were in need of care themselves.

Rick Wartzman (00:48:19)

Right? They were parents and yes.

Sarita Gupta (00:48:20)

They were parents. They were grandparents, et cetera. The families, when we say families and workers, families are working families and we forget that. According to Bureau of Labor statistics in the next few years, 50% of the workforce will be caring for an aging adult in their families and yet, we don't have paid leave in this country, right? We don't have the kinds of supports in place. So we saw amazing work happening in places like Washington State where care workers, the union SCIU really advocated for the Washington, the Long-Term Care Trust Act, or in our stories, we talked about Kimberly Mitchell as another worker who was profiled, who is a retail worker at Macy's who also talks about her experience as a caregiver to her grandmother with cancer, and then her own mother with cancer, who was a leader in the fight for paid leave in D.C.

That was one ultimately, or even Dolores Wright, who was a domestic worker. And another worker we profiled who was really involved in the New York State domestic workers bill of rights, the first of its kind in the country, and then transformed by that experience and recognized that she could be an advocate in terms of her own housing situation and is now a leader at Crown Heights Tenants Union. Those are examples of the kinds of ways that when you look at people as whole people, so much is possible. So much is possible.

Rick Wartzman (00:49:51)

Yeah. I'm going to shift to a question for the audience and I think it's a great question, which is how can awareness of best practices be disseminated? Because a lot of beyond Aspen Institute convening and books, I mean, the truth is you've cited great examples, right? What's going on in Harris County, right? Some of the domestic workers standards and standards boards that have been passed, but we also talked about the big numbers of so many still left behind. So how do we scale this thing? Right? We already know what to do. We're already doing it, but in pockets. How do you spread that awareness and implementation?

Erica Smiley (00:50:33)

Yeah. I mean, the first step is creating more opportunities and containers and supports for workers who are trying to organize and collectively bargain in these different ways. And for us to continue lifting them up as examples, not out of just cool community campaigns or even trying to silo them as alt labor, but actually saying that this is a victory for the labor movement. This is how we're actually expanding and building power together. I think the second thing, particularly from a perspective of businesses and business leaders is an extension of what I said before around business schools. In some ways, I think the curriculum for where these types of discussions happen if they happen at all is incredibly narrow. It's often in some kind of like maybe ethics class, so an elective, if you're required to take it.

So one of the questions becomes who's willing to work with those of us in the movement to develop a strong curriculum that fits within the foundation of any business school curriculum where this idea of stakeholders is a part of the opening discussion and a part of what it requires to have businesses to have systems to engage labor management in ways that are democratic and are valuable. So I think these are some of the critical things. I think the last thing is to the degree that as contributors, philanthropists, stakeholders ourselves even on other sides, say as consumers like with Amazon Prime members and things like that, to really think about our role democratically to think about it, not just as people who are consuming something or receiving something or even just being impacted by a thing to what is our relationship to it? Are there others who have a similar relationship, and should we try to negotiate standards together? What would this company's behavior look like in my community? Right?

And I feel like we try to do that with the bad add business fee, which we talk about in the book. And I know the State of Oregon did that through their own corporate taxes. Right? And in terms of who benefits from the state and how much they then have to pay back into it, but really thinking of those relationships, because at the end of the day, companies or just like regular individuals, we negotiate economic relationships constantly and companies sign contracts with each other for everything. You got contracts with subcontractors, contracts with your legal people, contracts with your lobbyists or whatever. Why do workers just have one narrow platform through which to negotiate agreements? It doesn't make any sense at all as well. Why limit parts a participation for trying to build a healthy, multiracial democracy in this country? Then we need as many, as messy as they are, platforms for shared governance as we can get.

Rick Wartzman (00:53:22)

That's great. Yeah. Sarita, anything to add there?

Sarita Gupta (00:53:25)

The only thing I would add is I want to go back to where I started this conversation around the cultural moment we're in. And that I think the other way we do it is actually finding the authentic ways that

people are digesting information and figuring out how you tell these stories through those venues. My daughter is 11 years old. She's a soccer player. When she found out that the National Women's Soccer League had unionized the whole team, I used to coach her team, they all ran up to me. They're like, "Pay equity. Why don't women get paid the same as men?" And they were irate. And they learned about it through TikTok. So my point here is that I think sometimes we also limit the venue by which we tell these stories and circulate these stories, but how do we authentically understand where people digest information, get information from?

And some of that is in the pop culture arena and being smart about that, or actually, Smiley, in my decision to have DeMaurice Smith write this forward for our book was very much to remind people that athletes have unions.

Rick Wartzman (00:53:25)

Yeah. Absolutely.

Sarita Gupta (00:54:35)

And they're better for it. But to really help lift up like people's notion of who a worker is and a union is, it's still very much the big Burley guy in a factory. And that is not who workers today are. It's not limited to that. Right? So really lifting up the diversity of who we consider workers who are valued in our society and telling those stories, I think is another way that we breakthrough. We have breakthroughs in this moment.

Rick Wartzman (00:55:07)

Absolutely. Let me ask. I think we may have time for just one more here, depending, maybe one or two more. Do you have any experience, another audience question experience with employees working with shareholders to increase empowerment and what does that look like?

Erica Smiley (00:55:23)

There's so much shareholder activism. Absolutely. I mean, just on a top line and actually, Sarita, you should answer this too just from your new perspective, but some of the biggest pension funds are union pension funds and are literally guided by workers and they're a set of values and standards and inserting that into this shareholder discussions and company discussions. I think additionally, when you think about similar funds, whether they're from a state healthcare like investment in their pension fund or even foundations, right? This is all money that workers made at some point. So there's a question, again, getting back to this idea of who gets to say how it's used is that the foundation of it. So certainly with the union pension fund is very direct.

Obviously, working people know and that's our money and that's my retirement you're investing. Right? But is it the same with some of these bigger state-run funds? Is it the same with some of the private funds that we know that workers generated the income for? And that's something that I know many of us have begun to really think more intentionally about working with partners like the Ford Foundation and many others to really think through what worker-based shareholder activism could look like. I think the only other example are in places where workers themselves are shareholders and historically, like we've seen that with the original Walmart under Sam Walton, right? Where workers had a more direct involvement. They got paid to some degree with shares and were able to then participate more democratically in that way.

And that of course got eroded over time with Sam's descendants who were less open to that type of workplace democracy, but I think there are definitely models for where it could be really impactful. And some of those same workers who organized with Walmart through United for Respect then had a similar strategy working with shareholders at Toys "R" Us after money managers bankrupted the company, because they had very different interests around managing finances and not actually around managing people. So there are a lot of opportunities where the interests of shareholders and workers can align and where workers as shareholders can play a unique role, again, as whole people thinking about the many different capacities they bring to an enterprise.

Rick Wartzman (00:57:53)

Yeah. Yeah. Sarita?

Sarita Gupta (00:57:55)

That's great. I don't know that I have more to add. I know you wanted to try to sneak in another question, but I think that's right. All of that to say that there's huge opportunities and the one other network I would say that at Ford, we've been working a lot with is a network of state treasurers to really engage in a conversation with advocates and others to say, "What's your role as state treasurers who oversee these kinds of pension funds and what could be a set of values that really speak to the needs of workers that you can imagine helping to implement moving forward in terms of your investment portfolios?" So I think there's a lot of opening here. We're just scratching the surface.

Rick Wartzman (00:58:36)

Yeah. Agreed. Agreed. Yeah. Maureen, do you want to pick us back up?

Maureen Conway (00:58:41)

Yeah. Yeah. We are unfortunately at time, but this has been fantastic. Thank you so much. Personally, I feel like in this difficult moment when we're looking at this epidemic of low-wage work and this dicey geopolitical moment and threats to democracy, I just so appreciate this conversation for, to put it in your words, Sarita, reminding us that so much is possible and just lifting up the ways that people are making change. It's just been really inspiring for me. So thank you both so much. Reminder, this is the book, "The Future We Need." Check it out. This has been a great conversation. Really appreciate it. Rick, thank you so much for your great questions. Great moderation. Thanks so much to the audience for participating. Really appreciate everybody being here. Also, have to, again, thank my Business and Society colleagues, particularly Miguel Padro, but all of them who worked with us and my wonderful behind-the-scenes colleagues, Tony Mastria, Victoria Prince, Matt Helmer, Yoorie Chang, who are so instrumental in making these events happen.

Really, audience, please do let us know what you think. Please take a moment to respond to that survey in the Polls tab of your Slido box before you go. You can also, again, send us an email at eop.program@aspeninstitute.org. We'd love to hear from you, and please do join us again. Two events coming up, "Title VII of the Civil Rights Act" on April 27th and "The Occupational Safety and Health Act" on May 4th. So please join us again. Thank you for being here and hope to see you soon. Bye.