

**Remarks by AFL-CIO President Richard L. Trumka
2012 DC Labor FilmFest—“We Are Wisconsin”
Washington, DC
October 12, 2012**

I'm Rich Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO. And I want to thank you for joining us today at the AFL-CIO for the 2012 DC Labor FilmFest screening of “We Are Wisconsin.”

Before I begin, let me just say that this is another absolutely wonderful film festival -- the 12th year running -- and it has another lineup of important and entertaining movies. The credit for this festival really goes to its organizers, the DC Metro Council, and to AFSCME and WTU Local 6, which have supported the festival in so many important ways. Please join me in a round of applause for the DC Labor FilmFest!

When we look back on the heroes and leaders of labor history, we see women and men who stood up and said what other people thought but couldn't, or didn't, say. And we see that to speak out was a tough act of courage. And it was risky. But in the right conditions, that act of courage could be like a spark in tinder. It could ignite movements and ultimately bring about tremendous positive change.

Art sometimes allows us a vantage point to see those sparks around us. And art can certainly bring alive the struggles of the past. By witnessing the stories of those struggles, we can learn from them. We can imagine similar transformations today.

I'm so glad we are screening “We Are Wisconsin” today because it gives new focus to the unbelievable and electric energy of the Wisconsin Moment -- the Midwest uprising!

Who would have imagined that in a matter of a few days in early 2011, the national debate would be seized by working people, and turned from deficit hysteria to a conversation about jobs, the middle class and collective bargaining!

This wasn't one union calling on members to turn out. It wasn't the AFL-CIO making the call. It wasn't the Democratic Party, or the Obama organization. We saw a bottom-up, grassroots movement with its own momentum, a true spontaneous outcry against our disastrous winner-take-all political culture.

I traveled to Wisconsin, and I saw the crowds swell by the tens of thousands, and then top 100,000. I saw students and Steelworkers who had been sleeping in the capitol building for what already felt like forever. I saw teachers and other public workers with their families. I saw farmers and families from all walks of life, people who had no direct personal stake in the Wisconsin political fight, all rallying to support the good, middle-class jobs and rights of Wisconsin's public employees.

In this film, you'll see this movement grow from the grassroots level. I think you'll find it inspiring and touching. It may move you to tears. And I hope it moves you to action.

What an amazing thing it is to see a movement appear and grow like that. It's our responsibility as progressives and as labor activists, to see that this movement continues to grow and spread. This is our movement, whether or not you were in Wisconsin, because as the title says, "We Are Wisconsin." This struggle is our struggle. This fight is our fight. It belongs to all of us when we stand together.

"We Are Wisconsin" should be seen by everyone who hopes for lasting and real social justice and economic change in America.

There are many great movies about labor and political movements in America. This stands up with the best of them.

Thank you again for coming. Please enjoy the show.