

Young Workers Show Less Progress Than 10 Years Ago

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On Monday, the United States will celebrate Labor Day. The holiday honors working people. But a new study finds disturbing developments for young workers between the ages of 18 and 35. The study blames the downturn in the economy and insufficient government intervention.



Eric Schaffer

Eric Schaffer passes the time trolling the Internet, on Facebook and My Space.

Schaffer, 23, doesn't feel he's made it to adulthood.

"I feel you know, trapped. I can't get out into the real world. I'm stuck here. I'm stuck doing something that, just to get by," he said.

Schaffer was laid off in February when his company lost a lucrative government contract.

He can't afford an apartment, so he lives at home with his mom.

To get by, Schaffer works for his mom delivering legal papers. He gets paid \$25 for each delivery.

"Somedays I do get work, other days I'll have no work," he explained. "I might get two papers a week, sometimes I get 15 a week."

As Schaffer deals with his own financial problems, he serves notices to other people feeling the financial sting. He hands out foreclosure decisions.

Schaffer is not alone. A new study by America's largest labor organization found that one in three young workers, under the age of 35, lives at home. One in three has no health insurance. And, more than half earn less than \$30,000 a year. That's well below the average per capita income in the U.S.

"The national study we just released today shows just how broken our economy is for our young people and what's at stake if we don't fix it," said John Sweeney who is president of the AFL-CIO, the powerful labor federation.

The study shows that 30 percent of young workers have postponed having children because of financial concerns. Forty percent have delayed higher education.

Richard Trumka is secretary treasurer of the AFL-CIO. He says the solution is with the government.



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"Let the stimulus package work and we think we need a second stimulus package to create more jobs," he said.

Chris Edwards, an economist with the conservative Cato Institute, disagrees.

"I think a second stimulus package would burden young workers more than anyone else," he said. "Because it would increase the federal government's debt and that debt of course is going to be a cost that lowers the standard of living of young people in the future."

Edwards says the economy just needs to run its course and more baby boomers will retire leaving numerous jobs for young people.

But for 20-somethings like Eric, life, for now, is on hold.

"I hope I can get back on my feet and move forward, but only time will tell," added Eric Schaffer.

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