

UNDER THE BUS

How
Working
Women
Are
Being
Run Over

CAROLINE FREDRICKSON

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Most Americans think that our country has done quite a lot to protect women and ensure gender equity in the workplace. After all, we have banned discrimination against women, required equal pay for equal work, and adopted family-leave legislation. But the fact is that we have a two-tiered system, where some working women have a full panoply of rights while others have few or none at all. We allow blatant discrimination by small employers. Domestic workers are cut out of our wage and overtime laws. Part-time workers, disproportionately women, are denied basic benefits. Laws are written through a process of compromise and negotiation, and in each case vulnerable workers were the bargaining chip that was sacrificed to guarantee the policy's enactment. For these workers, the system that was supposed to act as a safety net has become a sieve—and they are still falling through.

Caroline Fredrickson is a powerful advocate and D.C. insider who has witnessed the legislative compromises that leave out temps, farmworkers, employees of small businesses, immigrants, and other workers who fall outside an intentionally narrow definition of "employees." The women in this fast-growing part of the workforce are denied minimum wage, maternity leave, health care, the right to unionize, and protection from harassment and discrimination—all within the bounds of the law. If current trends continue, their fate will be the future of all American workers.

Under the Bus: How Working Women Are Being Run Over Details

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Marya says

While the information covered within was insightful, the writing itself was mediocre. I liked learning more about the topic, but ran out of time to trudge through the prose to finish it. It's great to see that there is at least one book covering women for whom putting food on the table for their family has to trump any considerations on whether to "lean in" or not.

Melissa Ooten says

Just what I've needed to add to my Gender and Work course.

Sherry says

How they are being run over is detailed carefully. How to fix it is described as well. Every woman should have access to fair treatment, fair pay, child care, health care, leave options and more. It's infuriating to read, how time after time, women and particularly women of color are excluded from all protections.

Caroline Fredrickson says

So, I'm a bit biased

Aaron Chu says

Empowering and informative, Frederickson reveals much of the shambles that is the current Labor laws, which continue to exploit working class women (many women of color) since the New Deal. From the exclusion of small companies in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act to the malicious re-categorization of "employees" as a way for companies to avoid paying benefits, Frederickson illustrated many road blocks in the fight for gender equality in today's work place. My favorite part is the stories that are told in the book, which is crucial for one to understand what these non-elitist women have to go through as women, and sometimes as mothers as well. Not all women have the luxury to "opt-out" and these stories inspire us not to "Lean In", but lean together and in solidarity.

sacha kenton says

you have to be a moron not to know the stuff in here. i mean the info is ok but kudos to you if you learned

something you didn't know. you're alive? i feel like this could be called 'duh'
oh and it's highly publicized for some reason like this is the new twilight genre

Suzanne Burger says

Outstanding. A bit polemical but for someone who knew nothing about the loopholes surrounding labor laws, a remarkable eye opener.

Barbara says

Highly recommend picking this up. It's a good exploration of how laws and legislation have been constructed in ways that continually push lower class workers down. Includes some amazing sexist and racist quotes from the congressional record, and the authors discussion of how she helped writes legislation that perpetuates discrimination workout really being aware of how she was doing so.

Bob Tate says

I learned a great deal from this book about quality of life obstacles women, and disproportionately women of color, face on account of retrograde and self-hindering U.S. policies that simply do not address critical issues and make balancing work and family life needlessly exasperating or impossible to navigate. I found it a well-written, accessible polemic that packs a punch and am recommending to a number of people I know. Kudos to Caroline Frederickson for this book and for her efforts more broadly to sound this trumpet.

Ken Schaefer says

The author does a great job recognizing the problem and even cites the system we have as being a problem. Yet she offers few solutions and those she does offer are based upon the capitalists system. Women and children have been victimized since we have had patriarchy. Our economic systems have not helped much whether one speaks of primitive communism, slavery, feudalism and even capitalism. True socialism must be tried. True socialism as outlined at www.worldsocialism.org. Give it a try. It hasn't been tried yet; socialism or your money back. Answers to the problems outlined in this book are not to be found in capitalism
