



TV program focuses on workers' issues

By Stephen Franklin
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Hey you, says the guy with the microphone in his hand, you ever see or hear stories about workers in the media?

Nah, a guy on Wabash grumbles.

You kidding? says a woman also standing under the "L".

"What they do, makes it seem like everyone is doing OK, but they aren't," she says.

The message from these folks in downtown Chicago, according to the program shown this Sunday at 12:30 p.m. on Chicago's PBS station, WTTW-Ch. 11, is that workers rarely rate attention from the news media.

The program comes from We Do The Work, a California-based group that focuses on workers' issues. The series is the only one of its kind regularly broadcast on public television across the U.S.

Unfortunately, like the U.S. news media's coverage of workers and workplace issues, the program doesn't get enough attention or air time on public broadcasting stations.

Some of the punches taken at the news media's coverage in this Sunday's program make sense and are worthy of considering.

An official from Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, a media watchdog group, says on the

program that only 2.3 percent of the total news coverage in 1989 was about working people.

The program's basic argument is that there is some reporting on workers' issues, but far too little. As an example of good reporting, Dayton Daily News reporter Mike Casey is heralded for an investigative series on the Occupational Health and Safety Administration.

There is also a fascinating interview with two labor cartoonists, Gary Huck and Mike Konopaki, one of whom candidly says, "the most effective cartoonists are the folks who draw their own stuff and put it on their lockers and machines and computers."