

Security gives you freedom

General election day, September 17th, is the day when Sweden's future is to be decided, and it will be up to you and me to cast our vote. We all share the same responsibilities, and all votes are equal. Should we further and improve our welfare system, or should we downgrade by taking one out of every five tax krona out of the public coffers? Should we continue developing the Swedish welfare model – or should we abandon it?

We can all fall ill or lose our job. We all grow old, and sometimes the family grows bigger. That's why Sweden has a social insurance scheme guaranteeing us financial security if we suffer a loss of income. In other words, whenever we're unable to work because of unemployment, illness or occupational injury, or if we have to take time off to look after young or sick children. Life changes, and sometimes those changes mean that you need extra support

We, the Social Democrats, don't believe that if you fall ill or the company closes down you should have to sell your home. Nor that a child should be forced to stop taking part in after school activities just because a parent falls ill or loses his or her job. That's why an equitable system of social insurance is needed to provide a guaranteed income in the event of illness, unemployment, occupational injury or parental leave. This provides security both for the individual and for the family as a whole and means that you won't be afraid to retrain, move house, start a family or set up in business. Everyone will gain. Security gives you freedom.

Our Swedish social security model is based on the notion that while we're working and in good health we can help provide public assistance to people in need. When we're healthy and in work, we pay part of our income towards a social insurance scheme from which we can ourselves expect help if our circumstances change – if, for example, we fall ill or lose our job. That makes Sweden more caring and provides an effective security system that everyone can afford.

Social insurance makes people who live in Sweden feel more secure and free as well as stronger. Together we make Sweden more



competitive and more open towards the rest of the world. This is essential if we are to retain our public welfare and high living standards. Personal security and development lead to national growth and welfare for all, which is why social insurance is an important part of the Swedish welfare model. Social insurance brings security and paves the way for growth, progress and new jobs.

The Alternative

Against our conviction that security gives you freedom stands the Moderate-dominated right-wing alliance that believes that hungry wolves hunt best. The Moderates want to undermine the protection provided by the security system by lowering benefits, by introducing an extra no-benefit sickday and by saying No to raised benefit ceilings.

This means that the safety system providing financial security in the event of unemployment, illness, parental leave, occupational injury or time off for care of a sick child will be badly affected. Even today, many of the infirm and unemployed can only just scrape by. How will it become easier for people who fall severely ill or lose their jobs to return to work if benefits are cut to such a low level that the entire family is forced out of house and home?

The Moderates want to bring down wages. By cutting back unemployment benefits and sickness benefits, the Moderates want to force a new, low-wage labour market on us. Anyone who is ill or unemployed must receive such low benefits that they're forced to accept a low-paying job that it's impossible to live on. That, in turn, will force down wages for everyone, creating a vicious downward spiral. With more and more people on low income, general demand will decrease and the economy will slow down.

Are wage cuts the right way to enable Sweden to compete on a global market? We, the Social Democrats, believe in knowledge and professional expertise rather than reduced security and lower wages. That the Swedish growth rate is higher than the European average, that our living standards continue to rise and that our social welfare is among the best in the world is proof enough that our Social Democratic model is successful.

Our social insurance scheme goes a long way towards explaining Sweden's successes and is an important component of the Swedish welfare model. Social insurance provides security. It is founded on solidarity. It paves the way for growth, development and new jobs.

In our Sweden, everyone is welcome. Which Sweden will you choose?

