

Unions Are Good for America

Unions benefit all workers

- Unions boost incomes of nonunion workers in industries and markets where unions are strong. For example, a high school graduate whose workplace is not unionized but whose industry is 25 percent unionized is paid 5 percent more than similar workers in less unionized industries.¹
- Union members earn on average \$207 more each week than nonunion workers. That's nearly \$11,000 a year.²
- Women and African Americans represented by unions earn between 30.5 and 32.8 percent more than their nonunion counterparts, respectively. Latino workers with the union advantage make 53.2 percent more than those who are not represented by a union.³
- Unions reduce income inequality. The wage gap among union members is 40 percent less severe than the wage gap among nonunion workers. For women union members, the difference amounts to \$200 plus per week more than nonunion women workers.⁴
- Workers covered by a collective bargaining contract are more likely to have access to health care and pension benefits provided through their employer than nonunion workers. In fact, 95 percent of union members have health insurance and a pension plan available to them, far greater than those who are not in a union.⁵

Unions make all workplaces safer

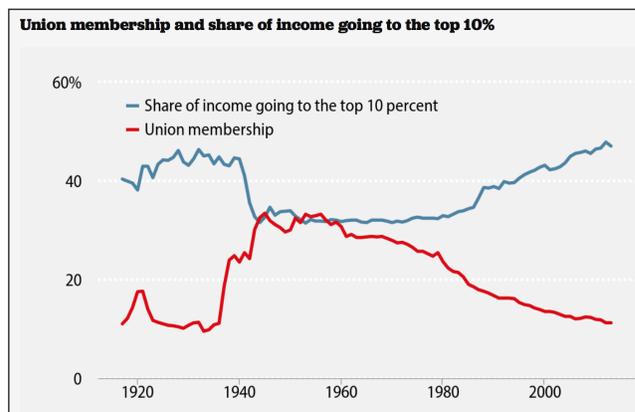
- Unions have championed laws such as the National Labor Relations Act and the Occupational Safety and Health Act that set safety and health standards for all workers, and union contracts help to enforce those rights on the job.⁶
- Union members have access to some of the best workplace health and safety resources available. The cost of preventing workplace injuries is far less than the cost of dealing with the injury itself, and a safe workplace attracts and retains quality workers, which, in turn, makes the entire community safer.⁷

Unions make better communities

- Taxpayers are better off in states where public employees enjoy collective bargaining because workers earn more and therefore have more to spend, building a stronger local economy.⁸
- Incomes are higher in states where state employees can unionize.⁹
- Eight of the top 10 states in terms of disposable income recognize the right of public employees to bargain collectively. Nine of the bottom 10 states in per capita income do not have public sector collective bargaining.¹⁰
- Increasing the number of workers in unions by a modest amount could pump \$49 billion into the U.S. economy.¹¹

Unions make people happy

- Union members are generally happier in various quality-of-life measures than nonunion workers, according to a study by professors at Baylor University and the University of Arkansas.¹²
- Union-represented workers are more likely to have a medical plan and retirement benefits. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 94 percent of private industry workers who were represented by a union in 2014 were offered health insurance benefits by their employer. That compares to 68 percent of nonunion workers.¹³



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Piketty and Saez (2013)

References:

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