# Framing

**My value is morality and my value criterion is minimizing structural violence.**

Structural violence refers to systematic ways in which social structures harm or otherwise disadvantage individuals. [http://www.structuralviolence.org/structural-violence/]

**Fighting oppression comes first because inclusion is a prerequisite to moral systems.**

**Winter and Leighton 99** [Deborah DuNann Winter and Dana C. Leighton. Winter is a psychology professor at Whitman College. Leighton is a researcher in social and peace psychology. “Structural Violence Section Introduction”. 1999. Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology in the 21st Century. http://sites.saumag.edu/danaleighton/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/09/SVintro-2.pdf. Accessed 11-16-2020]

Finally, to recognize the operation of structural violence forces us to ask questions about how and why we tolerate it, questions which often have painful answers for the privileged elite who unconsciously support it. A final question of this section is how and why we allow ourselves to be so oblivious to structural violence. Susan Opotow offers an intriguing set of answers, in her article Social Injustice. She argues that our normal perceptual/cognitive processes divide people into in-groups and out-groups. Those outside our group lie outside our scope of justice. Injustice that would be instantaneously confronted if it occurred to someone we love or know is barely noticed if it occurs to strangers or those who are invisible or irrelevant. We do not seem to be able to open our minds and our hearts to everyone, so we draw conceptual lines between those who are in and out of our moral circle. Those who fall outside are morally excluded, and become either invisible, or demeaned in some way so that we do not have to acknowledge the injustice they suffer. Moral exclusion is a human failing, but Opotow argues convincingly that it is an outcome of everyday social cognition. To reduce its nefarious efWInter & Leighton Structural Violence Page 4 fects, we must be vigilant in noticing and listening to oppressed, invisible, outsiders. Inclusionary thinking can be fostered by relationships, communication, and appreciation of diversity. Like Opotow, all the authors in this section point out that structural violence is not inevitable if we become aware of its operation, and build systematic ways to mitigate its effects. Learning about structural violence may be discouraging, overwhelming, or maddening, but these papers encourage us to step beyond guilt and anger, and begin to think about how to reduce structural violence. All the authors in this section note that the same structures (such as global communication and normal social cognition) which feed structural violence, can also be used to empower citizens to reduce it. In the long run, reducing structural violence by reclaiming neighborhoods, demanding social justice and living wages, providing prenatal care, alleviating sexism, and celebrating local cultures, will be our most surefooted path to building lasting peace.

**Additionally, prefer my framework because it is the only framework where fighting oppression comes first – any other just continues the exclusion of certain groups.**

Thus, I affirm that a just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

## Definitions

**A strike has three parts**

**Malebye 14** [Cynthia Dithato Malebye. Department of Mercentil Law, University of Pretoria. “The Right to Strike in Respect of Employment Relationships and Collective Bargaining”. 04-14. University of Pretoria. https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/43163/Malebye\_Right\_2014.pdf?. Accessed 11-14-2021]

The definition of a strike comprises of three elements, namely, non‐performance of work, by employees and for a stated purpose.

## Unconditionality Key

**Conditions on the right to strike make it ineffective.**

**Reddy 21** [Diana S. Reddy. Doctoral Fellow at the Law, Economics, and Politics Center at UC Berkeley Law. “There Is No Such Thing as an Illegal Strike”: Reconceptualizing the Strike in Law and Political Economy”. 01-06-2021. Yale Law Journal. https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy. Accessed 11-14-2021]

The National Labor Relations Board—the institution charged with enforcing the policies of the Act—summarizes these “qualifications and limitations” on the right to strike on its website in the following way:

The lawfulness of a strike may depend on the object, or purpose, of the strike, on its timing, or on the conduct of the strikers. The object, or objects, of a strike and whether the objects are lawful are matters that are not always easy to determine. Such issues often have to be decided by the National Labor Relations Board. The consequences can be severe to striking employees and struck employers, involving as they do questions of reinstatement and backpay.[93](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy" \l "_ftnref93)

The “right” to strike, it seems, is filled with uncertainty and peril.

Collectively, these rules prohibit many of the strikes which helped build the labor movement in its current form. Ahmed White accordingly argues that law prohibits effective strikes, strikes which could actually change employer behavior: “Their inherent affronts to property and public order place them well beyond the purview of what could ever constitute a viable legal right in liberal society; and they have been treated accordingly by courts, Congress, and other elite authorities.

#### The right to strike solves.

Nolan 21 [Hamilton Nolan. “Get Rid of No-Strike Clauses and Stop Begging”. 5-4-2021. In These Times. https://inthesetimes.com/article/no-strike-clause-labor-peace-union-contracts. Accessed 11-17-2021]

In post WWII America, union contracts work more or less like this: The company guarantees workers certain wages and benefits, and the workers agree to give up their right to strike for the term of the contract. This fundamental agreement — material gains in exchange for labor peace — defines modern labor relations. And where has this arrangement gotten the labor movement near death. For decades, union membership has declined, wages have stagnated, and capital has gained more and more power over working people. This devastating collapse in the power of organized labor has coincided with the post ​“Treaty of Detroit” period in which a very dangerous idea was cemented and enshrined as conventional wisdom. That is the idea that employers agree to union contracts in order to purchase labor peace—that the incentive for a company to bargain and sign a contract with its workers is to receive, in turn, a guarantee that those workers will be quiescent. Today, the belief in the necessity of this arrangement prevails among management-side attorneys, labor-side attorneys, and union leaders alike. Indeed, it is embodied very well in this quote that the Sacramento Bee got from labor attorney Tim Yeung when asking about the proposal to get rid of no-strike clauses: ​“It’s all about labor peace,” Yeung said. ​“When we agree to a contract, we’re agreeing that for the next three years or whatever, we’re not going to have a strike. If you can walk out at any time, that defeats much of the purpose of what we’re trying to do.” Let me suggest a different, more reasonable framework for labor relations between an employer and its employees. The employer signs a union contract in order to buy the work the employees do. Labor peace is something that the employer purchases separately, by being a good employer, and not fucking the employees over. The basic act of enshrining a mundane agreement on wages and working conditions in a contract should rightly be seen as a normal part of doing business, not as something that working people have to fight to gain at the expense of their own rights. What a business gets in return for a union contract is a work force. What the workers get is freedom from having the terms of their employment radically upended at any moment. To our jobs, we should be obligated to give our time and our effort, but not our souls. The right to strike is, at the end of the day, the only thing that gives working people power. The only thing! Withholding our labor is the one and only weapon we have that can match the power that capital has  the economic power to render people destitute, a fearsome power that is every bit as threatening as guns and bombs. Any working person individually can be destroyed by that power. Collectively, however, working people can match that power by striking and forcing capital to grind to a halt. No set of laws, regulations, or contractual provisions will ever change the fact that this is the only balance of power that exists in a capitalist workplace. We are fed the illusion that giving up the right to strike in exchange for material gains is an even trade. But that’s not true. For a little bit of money, businesses gain freedom from the one thing that can make them negotiate evenly with their workers. They maintain their own economic weapons over their workers, while we willingly lay down ours and tell ourselves that we have won something.

# Contention 1: Wage Gaps

## Subpoint A: Gender Wage Gap

**Striking has lead to progress in fighting gender inequality – Switzerland proves.**

**Fox 19** [Kara Fox. Reporter for CNN business. “Women across Switzerland are on strike. They're protesting the gender pay gap”. 6-14-2019. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/2019/06/14/business/switzerland-women-protest-strike-gender-inequality-intl/index.html. Accessed 11-15-2021]

Swiss women are striking en masse on Friday, in a 24-hour nationwide protest to highlight the country’s poor record on gender equality and the gender pay gap.

The umbrella movement — which encompasses women from trade unions, feminist groups and women’s rights organizations — argues that one of the world’s richest nations has given half of its population a poor deal.

Minutes after midnight, the first protesters took to the streets under the demonstration’s motto: “Pay, time, respect,” kicking off a day of events aimed at drawing attention to a gaping divide in gender equality across the workplace and the home.

Workshops and demonstrations, flash mobs and stroller marches are scheduled in towns and cities across the country throughout the day, with a nationwide walkout timed for 3:30 p.m. local time (9:30 a.m. ET).

The gender gap isn't about what you make. It's about what you do

In a show of solidarity, some parliamentarians joined the strike, while other MPs wore purple – the color adopted for the movement – to signify their support.

The strike is the first of its kind since 1991, when a similar protest saw some 500,000 women demonstrate against continued gender inequality across all sectors of life, 10 years after gender equality was enshrined in the country’s constitution.

That movement eventually led to the passing of the Gender Equality Act in 1995, which banned discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace.

Now, Switzerland ranks first in the UNDP’s gender equality index, and in the World Economic Forum’s top 20 countries in last year’s global gender report.

Women strike for wage parity at the Lausanne railway station during a day of mass demonstrations across Switzerland on Friday.

But women’s rights activists say that women are still systemically discriminated against in the professional world, that job security and advancement is limited, and protections for women facing harassment, abuse and violence are lacking.

Data from Switzerland’s Federal Statistics Office supports those claims.

On average, in full-time employment, Swiss women earn 19.6% less than men. While that number has dropped by nearly a third over the last three decades, the discrimination gap — the gap in pay that has no explainable reason — is on the rise.

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Regula Bühlmann, central secretary for the Swiss Trade Unions Confederation, told CNN that although the law is in place to protect equality, women still “haven’t achieved equal rights at work.”

Yet Friday’s strike isn’t just about the pay gap.

Bühlmann added that although the focus of the trade unions’ protest was to highlight discrimination in the workplace, there are many reasons for women to strike, including the “everyday sexism” that prevails across many different aspects of society, and the burden that disproportionately falls on women in the home.

“What we really want is that men and women share paid and unpaid work equally, that women and their work is valued equally — or more — because at the moment, unpaid care workers are not valued,” Bühlmann said.

The importance of having women on professional stages

In a 19-point manifesto The Women’s Strike Geneva Committee, who have co-organized the movement, has called for better protections for women facing domestic violence and abuse, migrant women and domestic workers, increased parental leave and support for the LGBTQ community, among others.

Group member Kaya Pawlowska, 32, told CNN that she hopes that the widespread action will help to put the pressure on lawmakers to take concrete actions, just as the 1991 protests eventually did.

“Inequality is non-negotiable,” Pawlowska said.

“It’s not something that we can continue to consider that we might improve. We have a constitutional article that says we are equal, and there is absolutely no reason and no economic reason (to not be treated as such). We are not at war, we are not living under pressure, we can have this equality effectively.”

Women in the Swiss capital of Bern strike for equal rights during a nationwide protest on Friday.

Ursula Keller, a professor of physics at ETH Zürich university, told CNN that the issue of gender equality also pervades across academia, which had seen some positive changes off the back of the 1991 movement – but has since stalled.

After 25 years in her post, she says she is one of only two only senior women employed in her department, even though the number of professors have increased.

Like Pawlowska, Keller is hopeful that the strike can make a real impact.

“If we don’t fight for it we aren’t going to get it.”

**When given the right to strike, unions lead to reduced gender wage gaps.**

**Myall 19** [James Myall. Author at the Maine Center for Economic Policy. “Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us”. 4-17-2019. MECEP. https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/. Accessed 11-15-2021]

The right of workers to organize and bargain with their employer benefits all Mainers. Collective bargaining leads to better wages, safer workplaces, and a fairer and more robust economy for everyone — not just union members. The right to strike is critical to collective organizing and bargaining. Without it, Maine’s public employees are unable to negotiate on a level playing field.

Maine’s Legislature is considering a bill that would give public-sector workers the right to strike. MECEP supports the legislation, and is urging legislators to enact it.

The right to strike would enable fairer negotiations between public workers and the government. All of us have reason to support that outcome. Research shows that union negotiations set the bar for working conditions with other employers. And as the largest employer in Maine, the state’s treatment of its workers has a big impact on working conditions in the private sector.

Unions support a fairer economy. Periods of high union membership are associated with lower levels of income inequality, both nationally and in Maine. Strong unions, including public-sector unions, have a critical role to play in rebuilding a strong middle class.

Unions help combat inequities within work places. Women and people of color in unions face less wage discrimination than those in nonunion workplaces. On average, wages for nonunionized white women in Maine are 18 percent less than of those of white men. Among unionized workers, that inequality shrinks to just 9 percent. Similarly, women of color earn 26 percent less than men in nonunionized jobs; for unionized women of color, the wage gap shrinks to 17 percent.[i]

All of us have a stake in the success of collective bargaining. But a union without the right to strike loses much of its negotiating power. The right to withdraw your labor is the foundation of collective worker action. When state employees or teachers are sitting across the negotiating table from their employers, how much leverage do they really have when they can be made to work without a contract? It’s like negotiating the price of a car when the salesman knows you’re going to have to buy it — whatever the final price is.

Research confirms that public-sector unions are less effective without the right to strike. Public employees with a right to strike earn between 2 percent and 5 percent more than those without it.[ii]While that’s a meaningful increase for those workers, it also should assuage any fears that a right to strike would lead to excessive pay increases or employees abusing their new right.

LD 900, “An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Employees Under the Maine Labor Laws,” ensures that Maine’s public-sector workers will have the same collective bargaining rights as other employees in Maine. The bill would strengthen the ability of Maine’s public-sector workers to negotiate, resulting in higher wagers, a more level playing field, and a fairer economy for all of us.

## Subpoint B: Racial Wage Gap

**Large corporations such as Amazon prevent workers from unionizing in jobs where Black workers are overrepresented.**

**Perry et al. 21** [Andre M. Perry, senior fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Molly Kinder, David M. Rubenstein fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Laura Stateler, senior research assistant at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Carl Romer, former research assistant at the Metropolitan Policy Program. “Amazon’s union battle in Bessemer, Alabama is about dignity, racial justice, and the future of the American worker”. 3-16-2021. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/03/16/the-amazon-union-battle-in-bessemer-is-about-dignity-racial-justice-and-the-future-of-the-american-worker/. Accessed 11-15-2021]

Black workers are overrepresented among the risky essential jobs (like those at Amazon’s warehouses) on the COVID-19 frontlines, and especially among frontline jobs that pay less than a living wage. Black workers comprise 27% of Amazon’s workforce, compared to just 13% of workers overall in the U.S. In Amazon‘s Bessemer warehouse, union organizers estimate that 85% of workers are Black.

Amazon’s disproportionately Black workforce has risked their lives during the pandemic, but the company has shared little of its astonishing profits with them. Last year, Amazon earned an additional $9.7 billion in profit—a staggering 84% increase compared to 2019. The company’s stock price has risen 82%, while founder Jeff Bezos has added $67.9 billion to his wealth—38 times the total hazard pay Amazon has paid its 1 million workers since March.

Despite soaring profits, Amazon ended its $2 per hour pandemic wage increase last summer and replaced it with occasional bonuses. From March 2020 through the end of the year, Amazon’s frontline workers earned an average of $0.99 per hour of extra pay, or a roughly 7% pay increase. Amazon’s pandemic pay bump was less than half of the increased pay at competitor Costco, and a fraction of what it could have afforded from the extra profits it earned during—and largely because of—the pandemic. In fact, Amazon could have more than quintupled the hazard pay it gave its workers and still earned more profit than in 2019. And while Amazon frequently touts its $15 per hour starting wage, Costco’s recent increase of its starting wage to $16 per hour (despite having significantly smaller profits than Amazon) shows that $15 is a floor, not a ceiling.

## **A DRIVE FOR DIGNITY AND RACIAL JUSTICE SEEKS TO DEFY THE ODDS**

Some of the workers at the Bessemer warehouse have called on Amazon to reinstate its $2 per hour hazard pay. Yet Amazon’s unwillingness to share its staggering profits with its workers is not the only—or even the primary—driver of the union effort in Bessemer.

In an essay published in The Guardian last month, labor journalist Steven Greenhouse introduced Darryl Richardson, a 51-year-old “picker” at the Bessemer warehouse. Richardson voiced his frustration about the dehumanizing nature of his work at Amazon, including the unrelenting pace, the risk of being terminated at any point, and the constant surveillance.

“You don’t get treated like a person,” Richardson said. “They work you like a robot…You don’t have time to leave your workstation to get water. You don’t have time to go to the bathroom.” As Amazon’s profits climb and its market dominance continues, workers like Richardson want a seat at the table to make their workplace humane.

Bessemer’s pro-union workers face an uphill battle as they take on one of the most powerful companies in the world. Amazon’s aggressive anti-union tactics have garnered headlines, but they are illustrative of the daunting challenges and uneven playing field facing organizing efforts in all workplaces. Today, 65% of Americans approve of labor unions—the highest level since 2003. But after decades of declining union participation, only about 10% of American workers are members of one.

**Stronger unions and the ability to collectively bargain lead to reduced racial wealth inequalities.**

**Perry et al. 21 2** [Andre M. Perry, senior fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Molly Kinder, David M. Rubenstein fellow at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Laura Stateler, senior research assistant at the Metropolitan Policy Program. Carl Romer, former research assistant at the Metropolitan Policy Program. “Amazon’s union battle in Bessemer, Alabama is about dignity, racial justice, and the future of the American worker”. 3-16-2021. Brookings. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2021/03/16/the-amazon-union-battle-in-bessemer-is-about-dignity-racial-justice-and-the-future-of-the-american-worker/. Accessed 11-15-2021]

While the country’s decades-old labor laws make it extremely difficult for workers to form a union anywhere, the pervasive right-to-work laws in the South and conservative states make organizing efforts like the one in Bessemer even more difficult.

In the South, anti-labor laws are inextricably linked to the historic suppression of Black workers. Racism in the form of no- or low-wage Black labor has been part of the growth model of racialized capitalism. And when workers are unable to collectively bargain and demand their fair share, economic growth becomes concentrated in the hands of a few.

Fortunately, the Birmingham metropolitan area—home to Bessemer—has already proven that unionized Black workers can create economic growth and shared prosperity. At the turn of the 20th century, Birmingham labor unions facilitated the establishment of a Black middle class. Black and white miners organized to form the United Mine Workers (UMW) union and, together, secured better wages. Following UMW’s success, what was then known as the Alabama Federation of Labor (AFL) followed the same strategy of a racially integrated membership—in part out of fear that nonunionized Black workers would replace striking workers. As a result, Black Alabamians earned leadership positions and spots in every committee of the AFL, and the union’s first five vice presidents were Black. This inclusive labor movement continued until the 1930s, when U.S. Steel—rife with Ku Klux Klan members—began to restrict job promotions for unionized Black workers, limiting access to senior positions they previously occupied.

The Bessemer union battle comes after decades of concerted effort by business leaders and policymakers to beat back the 20th century victories of labor organizers. From Ronald Reagan’s breaking of the air traffic controllers’ strike to Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, these forces have eroded labor union protections, and with it, workers’ say in their workplaces.

Fixing the country’s broken labor laws to give workers like those in Bessemer a fighting chance will require major legislative change. Last week, the White House issued a statement backing the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act. The legislation would enable more workers to form a union, exert greater power in disputes, and exercise their right to strike, while curbing and penalizing employers’ retaliation and interference and limiting right-to-work laws. The PRO Act passed in the House of Representatives last week but faces long odds in the Senate due to strong Republican opposition and fierce resistance from business. Short of ending the filibuster, the act has little chance of passage.

Ultimately, change will require an empowered workforce demanding it. In the words of Frederick Douglass, “Power concedes nothing without a demand”—and that demand looks like Bessemer workers standing up to one of the most powerful companies the world has ever seen.

In order for these and other workers to have a chance, they will need allies in Congress to create a more level playing field. In 1935, the 74th Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act because of the labor movement. In 1964, the 88th Congress passed the Civil Rights Act because of the civil rights movement. Today, the 117th Congress needs similar pressure from the racial and economic justice movements. The workers in Bessemer are doing just that, which should inspire others across the nation to demand better working conditions, higher wages, and stronger labor laws from both their own management and leaders in Washington.

# Contention 2: Legislation

## Subpoint A: Changing laws

**Strikes lead to political change – minimum wage strikes prove.**

**Reddy 21** [Diana S. Reddy. Doctoral Fellow at the Law, Economics, and Politics Center at UC Berkeley Law. “There Is No Such Thing as an Illegal Strike”: Reconceptualizing the Strike in Law and Political Economy”. 01-06-2021. Yale Law Journal. https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy. Accessed 11-14-2021]

In recent years, consistent with this vision, there has been a shift in the kinds of strikes workers and their organizations engage in—increasingly public-facing, engaged with the community, and capacious in their concerns.[178](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy" \l "_ftnref178) They have transcended the ostensible apoliticism of their forebearers in two ways, less voluntaristic and less economistic. They are less voluntaristic in that they seek to engage and mobilize the broader community in support of labor’s goals, and those goals often include community, if not state, action. They are less economistic in that they draw through lines between workplace-based economic issues and other forms of exploitation and subjugation that have been constructed as “political.” These strikes do not necessarily look like what strikes looked like fifty years ago, and they often skirt—or at times, flatly defy—legal rules. Yet, they have often been successful.

Since 2012, tens of thousands of workers in the Fight for $15 movement have engaged in discourse-changing, public law-building strikes. They do not shut down production, and their primary targets are not direct employers. For these reasons, they push the boundaries of exiting labor law.[179](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy" \l "_ftnref179) Still, the risks appear to have been worth it. A 2018 report by the National Employment Law Center found that these strikes had helped twenty-two million low-wage workers win $68 billion in raises, a redistribution of wealth fourteen times greater than the value of the last federal minimum wage increase in 2007.[180](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy" \l "_ftnref180) They have demonstrated the power of strikes to do more than challenge employer behavior. As Kate Andrias has argued:

[T]he Fight for $15 . . . reject[s] the notion that unions’ primary role is to negotiate traditional private collective bargaining agreements, with the state playing a neutral mediating and enforcing role. Instead, the movements are seeking to bargain in the public arena: they are engaging in social bargaining with the state on behalf of all workers.”[181](https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/there-is-no-such-thing-as-an-illegal-strike-reconceptualizing-the-strike-in-law-and-political-economy" \l "_ftnref181)

## Subpoint B: Climate change

**Strikes put pressure on companies to take action against climate change.**

**Ivanova 19** [Irina Ivanova. Climate reporter for CBS news. “These businesses are closing for Friday's climate strike”. 9-20-2019. No Publication. https://www.cbsnews.com/news/global-climate-strike-businesses-close-their-doors-in-time-for-climate-strike-2019/. Accessed 11-16-2021]

Thousands of people are planning to walk out of work or school on Friday to press global leaders for solutions to rapidly escalating climate change. And while it was students who started the movement, more and more workers—and even companies—are joining them in support.

Some businesses are letting workers take the day off to protest, while others plan to close their doors outright. They tend to be small or mid-sized businesses — most of the country's largest corporations have yet to weigh in on the strike, although plenty of people who work at them might yet participate when walkouts are set to start Friday afternoon.

Here are the ways workers and companies are supporting the strike.

Walkouts

* Amazon is expected to see more than 1,500 employees walk out, with the largest contingent exiting its Seattle headquarters, as they push the company to cut ties with fossil-fuel companies and stop funding groups that deny climate science. The company on Thursday announced it would make its operations carbon-neutral by 2040 and run entirely on renewable energy within a decade.
* More than 900 Google workers and unknown numbers of workers from Facebook, Atlassian, Cobot, Ecosia, Microsoft and Twitter are vowing walkouts. The strikers have details at [Tech Workers Coalition.](https://techworkerscoalition.org/climate-strike/)

Some smaller companies are giving workers paid time off to participate in the walkouts. These include Atlassian, Sustain Natural, Grove Collaborative and others.

Closures

* Ben & Jerry's corporate offices in South Burlington, Vermont, will be closed during the strike on Friday, while shops worldwide will either be closed or open later than usual. The company is also stopping production at its manufacturing plants in Vermont and the Netherlands, according to [Adweek](https://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/brands-are-closing-their-doors-in-support-of-the-global-climate-strike/). "We recognize that climate change is an existential threat to our planet and all its inhabitants, and therefore we are proud standing with the youth-led movement demanding bold action in response to the climate emergency," a spokesperson said.
* Patagonia is closing its retail stores for 24 hours on Friday. "For decades, many corporations have single-mindedly pursued profits at the expense of everything else — employees, communities and the air, land and water we all share," CEO Rose Marcario wrote on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/enough-join-climate-strikes-demand-action-rose-marcario/?sf219300827=1). "[C]apitalism needs to evolve if humanity is going to survive."
* Lush Cosmetics will close its manufacturing facilities and retail outlets on September 20 in the U.S. and on September 27 in Canada. It's also halting online sales on Friday.
* Badger Balm is closing for the day and giving workers paid time off to demonstrate or volunteer. The company is also donating 5% of online sales from September 16 to 27 to AmazonWatch.org to aid in preserving the shrinking Amazon's ecological systems, it said.
* Burton, the outdoor retailer, is closing its offices and owned retail stores on September 20th or 27th (depending on their country of location). It also won't make any online sales for 24 hours on Friday.
* SodaStream, the seltzer maker owned by PepsiCo, is shuttering its headquarters and closing e-commerce on Friday.

Digital doings and more

The heart of the strike will be in the streets, but that doesn't mean the action stops there. More than 7,000 [companies](https://digital.globalclimatestrike.net/) have pledged to draw attention to the protest by either donating ad space or putting banners on their sites. Participants include Tumblr, WordPress, Imgur, Kickstarter, BitTorrent, Tor,  BoingBoing, Greenpeace, Change.org, among many others.

**Companies are needed to fight climate change.**

**Axelrod 19** [Joshua Axelrod. Senior advocate, NRDC nature program. “Corporate Honesty and Climate Change: Time to Own Up and Act”. 2-26-2019. NRDC. https://www.nrdc.org/experts/josh-axelrod/corporate-honesty-and-climate-change-time-own-and-act. Accessed 11-16-2021]

As people around the globe have become increasingly exposed to the impacts of our climate crisis, the entities with perhaps the most power to stop the crisis—corporations—have begun to squirm. Corporations produce just about everything we buy, use, and throw away and play an outsized role in driving global climate change. A recently published report identified that 100 energy companies have been responsible for 71% of all industrial emissions since human-driven climate change was officially recognized. And it’s not just the energy sector. According to self-reported numbers, the top 15 U.S. food and beverage companies generate nearly 630 million metric tons of greenhouse gases every year. That makes this group of only 15 companies a bigger emitter than Australia, the world’s 15th largest annual source of greenhouse gases.

It’s important for us to understand these corporate contributions to climate change, but it’s even more important that major corporations drastically reduce their contributions as quickly as possible. Therein lies a serious tension. Many companies have set greenhouse gas reduction targets, but most of those targets fail to include the emissions associated with the entire life cycle of a given corporation’s products. This is important because when a company makes a product, that product requires raw materials that created their own emissions during harvest, extraction, refining, etc. (known as upstream emissions); and when a consumer uses that product, there are further emissions that come from the product’s use and eventual disposal (known as downstream emissions). Failing to account for or address these emissions means that the vast majority of greenhouse gases attributable to corporations and their products are falling outside of well-publicized corporate climate commitments.

**American Tissue Companies: Glossing Over Their Major Emissions** Take Procter and Gamble (P&G) as an example. NRDC and Stand.earth recently published an in-depth look at the impact P&G and a number of its competitors in the tissue sector are having on the world’s remaining intact forests. The report found that use of virgin pulp in the production of their toilet paper, facial tissue, and paper towel brands is a major greenhouse gas source. In fact, with annual virgin pulp use at 1.5 million metric tons, P&G’s disposable paper, hygiene, and baby care products are estimated to generate 17.8 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions each year. [1] That’s a big number—equivalent to the annual emissions of 3.8 million passenger vehicles—but P&G’s greenhouse gas reduction goal applies to only a tiny percentage of these emissions. [2] P&G’s climate commitment appears to be fairly progressive on paper: reduce annual emissions 50% by 2030. But the devil is in the details. P&G’s commitment only applies to what are known in the corporate greenhouse gas accounting world as Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions. These are emissions generated by a corporation’s own facilities—factories, vehicles, power plants—and the emissions generated by third parties from whom the corporation buys energy. These emissions are easy for corporations to measure, and relatively easy for them to control. But they’re only a fraction of the true impact of P&G’s operations. What happens if P&G were to include the emissions from the production of its raw materials and the use and disposal of its products (known as Scope 3 emissions in the corporate world) in its emissions reduction goals? Its baseline emissions number grows from 4.3 million metric tons to nearly 215 million metric tons. See the problem? P&G’s climate target only applies to 2% of the corporation’s estimated emissions and reducing this small sliver by 50% will only lead to an absolute reduction in the corporation’s climate footprint of 1%. And this is only part of the story. P&G, like many other corporations, seems to be omitting substantial volumes of greenhouse gas emissions from its Scope 3 emissions estimates. For example, the company’s emissions accounting category of “Purchased goods and services” is where the emissions from harvesting huge volumes of virgin pulp sourced from trees used in its tissue products should appear. P&G’s total estimate of its Scope 3 emissions for the climate impact of the extraction and harvest of all the raw materials across all its "purchased goods and services" is nearly 8.6 million metric tons of greenhouse gases. That’s a big number, but when we looked at just the lifecycle emissions of the company's virgin pulp use for tissue, hygiene, and baby care products alone, we found that P&G generates 17.8 million metric tons of greenhouse gases annually [1]—a difference from P&G's calculations of 9.2 million metric tons. How could these two estimates be so divergent? Giving P&G the benefit of the doubt, it is likely that some of the 9.2 million metric ton different is accounted for in the company’s production emissions (Scope 1 & 2), and in emissions associated with product use and disposal (Scope 3). Nonetheless, there appears to be a serious shortfall in the company’s calculations of Scope 3 emissions—especially since the “Purchased goods and services” segment encompasses whole other supply chains that have their own significant annual emissions (think plastics or the various manufactured chemicals in beauty and cleaning products). And P&G is not alone, even within the tissue sector. Kimberly-Clark, one of P&G’s biggest competitors, appears to underestimate its Scope 3 emissions even more drastically. It uses substantially more virgin pulp in its numerous disposable products—2.4 million metric tons to P&G’s 1.5 million. This volume of virgin pulp would be expected to produce 28.5 million metric tons of greenhouse gases annually [3], despite Kimberly-Clark’s estimate that all of the company’s emissions—Scope 1-3—generate only 17.5 million metric tons of emissions.

#### What Would Real Environmental Leadership Look Like?

These companies, which purport to be global environmental leaders, have a lot of work to do to address their full climate impacts. Measuring and reporting emissions is a great first step. Ensuring the accuracy of this measurement and transparent reporting would be a good second one. But at the end of the day, any “science-based target,” as P&G likes to say, must be a target that applies to all of the emissions a corporation’s activities and products are creating—not just those emitted while a product is being made in a factory.

P&G’s 50% greenhouse gas reduction target is a worthy goal, but that target should be leading to real world annual reductions of at least 107 million metric tons of greenhouse gases, not 2 million, because of the necessary inclusion of Scope 3 emissions. An essential first step to reducing these monumental, unaccounted for emissions, as NRDC and Stand.earth argue in their new report, would be for P&G to increase the use of recycled pulp in their tissue products. Today, the company uses no recycled content in their household products, even though using recycled pulp emits three times fewer greenhouse gases. Increasing to even 50% recycled content in its tissue, hygiene, and baby care products could lower P&G’s annual emissions by 6.2 million metric tons [4], a significant chunk of the reductions the company should make to help the world avoid the worst impacts of climate change.

Government and individual actions are vital to addressing climate change, but corporations, with their outsized influence and power in today’s world, have an even larger role to play. They are able to drive policy change, shape consumer preferences, and rapidly respond to the necessities of climate change at a scale and pace beyond any other political or private entity. Meaningful corporate action is not only necessary as climate change accelerates by the day, it is a global obligation. As some of the entities most responsible for putting us in the crisis we’re in today, it’s time for companies to take full responsibility for their climate footprints.

Warming causes structural violence

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The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina made it plain that structural inequalities produced by racism can determine who is most affected by severe weather events, and in turn disasters can greatly intensify social and political inequalities. In addition, within nearly any society the poorest and most vulnerable includes disproportionate numbers of females, people of color, and children. Research shows that large-scale disasters are especially devastating for those who lack economic and decision-making power, and that “economic insecurity is a key factor increasing the impact of disasters on women as caregivers, producers, and community actors” (Enarson 2000, viii). But economic security is not the only factor influencing female vulnerabilities. Existing social roles and divisions of labor can also set the stage for increased susceptibility to harm. The tsunami that struck Asia in late 2004 resulted in a much greater loss of life among women and girls in many locations, because women “stayed behind to look for their children and other relatives; men more often than women can swim; men more often than women can climb trees,” and at the time the waves struck, many men and boys were working in small boats or doing errands away from home (Oxfam 2005; see also American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists 2006). Extreme droughts, already occurring due to climate change, exacerbate gender inequalities in places where it is women’s and girls’ responsibility to gather daily water, for when water becomes more scarce, “many poor people, but particularly women and girls, will have to spend more time and energy fetching water from further away” (Stern 2009, 70). Physical hardship for women and girls is multiplied, but there are also auxiliary effects, such as decreased opportunities for girls to attend school and increased risk of assault (American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists 2006; Stern 2009; UN News Centre 2009). And wealthier high emitters with running water are not immune to such ecological pressures. In southeast Australia previously prosperous farmers are suffering due to reduced water availability and accompanying distribution policies. Women married to men in farming families report that their burden is greatly increased, because drought reduces farm income, and when wages are needed women find more opportunities for off-farm work. Some must travel far or temporarily relocate for employment, although their caretaking responsibilities remain. Male partners respond to the compounding impacts of loss of financial security, livelihood, and identity with increased incidences of depression and domestic violence (Alston 2008). Not surprisingly, their vulnerabilities are also shaped by norms of sex and gender.