### 1AC – Framework

#### I affirm the resolution, Resolved: A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### First, I would like to clarify the burden of the affirmative – the burden of the affirmative is not to prove that every single instance of a worker strike is good, but rather the right to strike as a general principle is good. 1 example of the right to strike being bad for a hyper-specific worker doesn’t mean that the affirmative is a bad idea.

#### I value equality, defined as “the state of being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.”[[1]](#footnote-1) Equality is the highest value of the round for two reasons –

#### First is motivation – maximizing equality allows individuals to have the most opportunity to improve both their own lives and society as a whole.

#### Second is bindingness – the alternative to equality is inequality which is obviously something that is intrinsically unethical – saying that inequality is good is tantamount to saying things like structural racism are good.

#### Thus, the value criterion is mitigating structural inequality. There are three reasons to prefer my value criterion –

#### 1] In order for a government to create an equal society, we must recognize our biases and strive to ensure that all people are morally included. Professors Winter and Leighton in 1999 write:

[Deborah DuNann Winter and Dana C. Leighton, Winter is a Professor at Whitman College and Leighton is a Professor at Texas A&M University, “Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century” 1999, <http://sites.saumag.edu/danaleighton/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/09/SVintro-2.pdf>]

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 effects, 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.

#### 2] Structural violence is hidden and embedded, which causes it to produce as much damage as direct violence. Winter and Leighton continue:

[Deborah DuNann Winter and Dana C. Leighton, Winter is a Professor at Whitman College and Leighton is a Professor at Texas A&M University, “Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Century” 1999, http://sites.saumag.edu/danaleighton/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/09/SVintro-2.pdf

Direct violence is horrific, but its brutality usually gets our attention: we notice it, and often respond to it. Structural violence, however, is almost always invisible, embedded in ubiquitous social structures, normalized by stable institutions and regular experience. Structural violence occurs whenever people are disadvantaged by political, legal, [and] economic or cultural traditions. Because they are longstanding, structural inequities usually seem ordinary, the way things are and always have been. The chapters in this section teach us about some important but invisible forms of structural violence, and alert us to the powerful cultural mechanisms that create and maintain them over generations. Structured inequities produce suffering and death as often as direct violence does, though the damage is slower, more subtle, more common, and more difficult to repair. Globally, poverty is correlated with infant mortality, infectious disease, and shortened lifespans. Whenever people are denied access to society’s resources, physical and psychological violence exists.

#### 3] Prioritizing structural violence is necessary because it is exponential and a threat multiplier. Professor Robert Nixon at the Princeton Environmental Institute in 2001 writes:

[Rob Nixon, Professor of English and the Princeton Environmental Institute, “Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor”, 2011, https://books.google.com/books/about/Slow\_Violence\_and\_the\_Environmentalism\_o.html?id=bTVbUTOsoC8C]

Three primary concerns animate this book, chief among them my conviction that we urgently need to rethink-politically, imaginatively, and theoretically-what I call "slow violence." By slow violence I mean a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. Violence is customarily conceived as an event or action that is immediate in time, explosive and spectacular in space, and as erupting into instant sensational visibility. We need, I believe, to engage a different kind of violence, a violence that is neither spectacular nor instantaneous, but rather incremental and accretive, its calamitous repercussions playing out across a range of temporal scales. In so doing, we also need to engage the representational, narrative, and strategic challenges posed by the relative invisibility of slow violence. Climate change, the thawing cryosphere,toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes present formidable representational obstacles that can hinder our efforts to mobilize and act decisively. The long dyings-the staggered and staggeringly discounted casualties, both human and ecological that result from war's toxic aftermaths or climate change-are underrepresented in strategic planning as well as in human memory. Had Summers advocated invading Africa with weapons of mass destruction, his proposal would have fallen under conventional definitions of violence and been perceived as a military or even an imperial invasion. Advocating invading countries with mass forms of slow-motion toxicity, however, requires rethinking our accepted assumptions of violence to include slow violence. Such a rethinking requires that we complicate conventional assumptions about violence as a highly visible act that is newsworthy because it is event focused, time bound, and body bound. We need to account for how the temporal dispersion of slow violence affects the way we perceive and respond to a variety of social afflictions-from domestic abuse to posttraumatic stress and, in particular, environmental calamities. A major challenge is representational: how to devise arresting stories, images, and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects. Crucially, slow violence is often not just attritional but also exponential, operating as a major threat multiplier; it can fuel long-term, proliferating conflicts in situations where the conditions for sustaining life become increasingly but gradually degraded. Politically and emotionally, different kinds of disaster possess unequal heft. Falling bodies, burning towers, exploding heads, avalanches, volcanoes, and tsunamis have a visceral, eye-catching and page-turning power that tales of slow violence, unfolding over years, decades, even centuries, cannot match. Stories of toxic buildup, massing greenhouse gases, and accelerated species loss due to ravaged habitats are all cataclysmic, but they are scientifically convoluted cataclysms in which casualties are postponed, often for generations. In an age when the media venerate the spectacular, when public policy is shaped primarily around perceived immediate need, a central question is strategic and representational: how can we convert into image and narrative the disasters that are slow moving and long in the making, disasters that are anonymous and that star nobody, disasters that are attritional and of indifferent interest to the sensation-driven technologies of our image-world? How can we turn the long emergencies of slow violence into stories dramatic enough to rouse public sentiment and warrant political intervention, these emergencies whose repercussions have given rise to some of the most critical challenges of our time?

### 1AC – Contention 1

#### Contention 1 is Inequality.

#### Income inequality is rising in the status quo.

**Chad Stone, chief economist at the center of budgest and policy priorities, shows in 2020:**

**Chad Stone 20** (Chad Stone, Chief Economist at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Acting executive director of the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress in 2007, Senior researcher at the Urban Institute, B.A. from Swarthmore College, Ph.D. in economics from Yale University) A Guide to Statistics on Historical Trends in Income Inequality 1-13-2020 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/a-guide-to-statistics-on-historical-trends-in-income-inequality //DebateDrills TJ

Wealth — the value of a household’s property and financial assets, minus the value of its debts — is much more highly concentrated than income. The best survey data show that the share of wealth held by the top 1 percent rose from 30 percent in 1989 to 39 percent in 2016, while the share held by the bottom 90 percent fell from 33 percent to 23 percent. Data from a variety of sources contribute to this broad picture of strong growth and shared prosperity for the early postwar period, followed by slower growth and growing inequality since the 1970s. Within these broad trends, however, different data tell slightly different parts of the story, and no single data source is best for all purposes.

#### Income Inequality leads to higher mortality rates and poverty.

**Diane McLaughlin, department of population research institute, writes in 2002:**

**Diane K. McLaughlin 02** (Diane K., McLaughlin, Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology and the Population Research Institute, the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PhD) Income Inequality and Mortality in US Counties: Does Minority Racial Concentration Matter? 1-7-2002 PubMed Central (PMC) https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1447397/#maincontent //DebateDrills TJ

Higher levels of inequality have been associated with a variety of societal problems, including higher mortality.1,2 Prior research has examined the relationship between income inequality and mortality for states and metropolitan areas in the United States.1,3–5 This research used different measures of income inequality and, with few exceptions,6,7 found strong relationships between income inequality and mortality. High levels of inequality, poverty, and mortality often are found in areas that have high concentrations of minorities, in particular Blacks.2,8 Despite this evidence, few studies have examined the influence of minority racial concentration on the relationship between inequality and mortality (for exceptions, see LaVeist9 and Jackson et al.10). In this study we addressed whether the income inequality gradient in mortality extends to the county level and whether counties with high concentrations of Blacks have higher mortality than counties with similar levels of inequality but a low or no predominance of Blacks. The disadvantaged position of Blacks in US society is well documented. Blacks are disproportionately found in lower-income categories11 and have higher mortality. The reasons suggested for higher mortality among Blacks vary greatly12–15 but include genetic variation, lifestyle and cultural differences, socioeconomic disadvantage, and the social and psychological consequences of discrimination.16–18

#### Strikes are an effective tool to increase power for the working class.

#### According to Kate Bahn, chief economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, writing in 2019:

Kate **Bahn 19** (Kate Bahn, Director of labor market policy and interim chief economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth, Bahn received her Ph.D. in economics from the New School for Social Research and her B.A. from Hampshire College.) The once and future role of strikes in ensuring U.S. worker power 8-29-2019 Equitable Growth https://equitablegrowth.org/the-once-and-future-role-of-strikes-in-ensuring-u-s-worker-power/ //DebateDrills TJ

At the same time, there is an increasing consensus today that unions are a positive force for increasing worker power and balancing against economic inequality. In polling of support for unions and specific aspects of collective bargaining, Equitable Growth grantee Alex Hertel-Fernandez of Columbia University, along with William Kimball and Thomas Kochan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, find that support for unions has grown overall, with nearly half of U.S. workers in 2018 saying they would vote for a union if given the opportunity. This is a significant increase from one-third of workers supporting unionization in 1995. According to their research, workers primarily value unions’ role in collective bargaining and ensuring access to benefits such as healthcare, retirement, and unemployment insurance. Strikes have historically been one of the strongest tools used by unions to ensure they have power to engage in collective bargaining. But striking was viewed as a negative attribute in the survey done by Hertel-Fernandez, Kimball, and Kochan. Yet, when they presented workers with the hypothetical choice of a union exercising strike power with other attributes of unions, such as collective

bargaining, support increased.

#### Collective bargaining solves economic inequality and racial wage gaps.

**Gordon Lafer, Professor at the University of Oregon’s Labor Education, writes in 2020:**

Gordon **Lafer 20** (Gordon Lafer, Political economist and is a Professor at the University of Oregon’s Labor Education and Research Center) Fear at work: An inside account of how employers threaten, intimidate, and harass workers to stop them from exercising their right to collective bargaining 7-23-2020 Economic Policy Institute https://www.epi.org/publication/fear-at-work-how-employers-scare-workers-out-of-unionizing/ //DebateDrills TJ

The right to collective bargaining is key to solving the crisis of economic inequality. When workers have the ability to bargain collectively with their employers, the division of corporate profits is more equally shared between employees, management, and shareholders. When workers can’t exercise this right, inequality grows and wages stagnate, as shown in the long-term decline of workers’ wages over the past 40 years: CEO compensation has grown 940% since 1978, while typical worker compensation has risen only 12%—and that was before the coronavirus pandemic hit. The importance of unions has been even further heightened by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the national protests around racial justice. In recent months, thousands of nonunion workers walked off their jobs demanding personal protective equipment, hazard pay, and access to sick leave. The concrete realization that these things could only be won through collective action has also led many of these workers to seek to unionize in order to protect themselves and their families. At the same time, the importance of the power of collective bargaining for essential workers and Black workers has become clearer. Unionization has helped bring living wages to once low-wage jobs in industries such as health care and is a key tool for closing racial wage gaps. In recent years the Black Lives Matter movement has joined with the fight for a $15 minimum wage and other union efforts in order to win economic dignity for African American workers.

### 1AC – Contention 2

#### Contention 2 is Unions.

#### Recognizing the right to strike strengthens the power that unions have by creating unconditional leverage against companies.

**Hennebert and Faulkner write in 2020:** [Hennebert, Marc-Antonin, and Marcel Faulkner. “Are Strikes Still a Tool for Union Action? A Qualitative Investigation into the Private Sector in Quebec, Canada.” Economic and Industrial Democracy, vol. 41, no. 1, Feb. 2020, pp. 73–97, doi:10.1177/0143831X16684963.]

Economic and structural factors. Many respondents first recognized that the decision to go on strike was a ‘strategic choice’ dictated by several variables including the particularly important variable of their economic environment. Thus, for these respondents, it was important to analyse the economic conditions and, in particular, the conditions of the industry sector involved, and to thoroughly understand the state of the labour market before even considering going on strike as a rational choice of action. At this stage, the company’s financial situation appears to have been the most important variable to consider in making an informed decision. However, the respondents’ comments revealed a paradoxical argument. In fact, in order for a strike to be effective, it must have ‘serious financial consequences for the employer’, that is, it must ‘hurt the company’, but without undermining its survival. One union representative underlined the importance of seeking such a balance: … if I want to go on strike, or even if I want to put pressure on the employer, if I undermine the work of my members and the company, I have nothing to gain by it. So, the decision to go on strike must be taken in light of the company’s situation … I will be in a better position if the economic situation of the company is positive. Although the analysis of the company’s financial situation is not a new step in the decisional process leading to a strike, according to our interviewees, it nevertheless appears to be more complex than in the past because of the changing corporate structures of companies and the increasing blurring of their organizational boundaries. Identifying ‘the real corporate entity’ involved in the negotiation, knowing who ‘the real employer’ is, or ‘simply determining the real corporate profitability level’, have become increasingly difficult tasks. These tasks become even more complex when management teams refuse to be transparent about their financial information. One of our interlocutors summed up these difficulties as follows:

#### Unions disproportionately help those most in need, and therefore are a tool to help close the racial wealth gap.

Weller & Madland write in 2018:

Weller and Madland [Christian E. Weller and David Madland, 6-27-2018, "Union Membership Narrows the Racial Wealth Gap for Families of Color," Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/]

Being a union member creates a number of venues for workers to build more wealth than would be available for nonunion members.[4](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-4) Union members bargain collectively for wages, benefits, and procedures that affect their employment, such as when and how an employer can fire an employee. As a result of being covered by a collective bargaining agreement—the contract that employers and unions regularly sign and that governs these employment-related issues—union members have higher wages, on average; more benefits; and more stable employment than is the case for nonunion members**.** Higher wages then translate into more savings in absolute terms, as well as more tax incentives to save.[5](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-5) Furthermore, more job-related benefits—such as health insurance, defined benefit plans, and life insurance—mean that union members need to spend less money than do nonunion members to protect their families against future income losses. Therefore, they can save more money to pursue their own goals, such as paying for their children’s college education.[6](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-6) Lastly, union membership leads to greater employment stability and job protections that translate into longer tenures with one employer.[7](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-7) This employment stability translates into more savings, as union members are more likely to be eligible for key benefits such as retirement savings and can better plan for their futures.[8](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-8) This issue brief considers the relevant data broken down by union membership separately for whites and nonwhites. The data show that: Union members have greater wealth than nonmembers, and the difference is much larger for nonwhites than whites. From 2010 to 2016, nonwhite families who were also union members had a median wealth that was almost five times—485.1 percent, to be exact—as large as the median wealth of nonunion nonwhite families.[9](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-9) The difference between union and nonunion white families was much smaller, with the former having a median wealth that was only 139 percent that of the latter during that period. (see Table 1) Union members have higher earnings, more benefits, and more employment stability than nonunion members. Union members’ total annual earnings are between 20 percent and 50 percent greater than those of nonunion members. (see Table 2) The gap in income, benefits, and employment stability by union membership is larger for nonwhite families than for white families. The chance of having a 401(k) plan, for instance, is about 50 percent greater for nonwhite union members compared with their nonunion counterparts, but the gap among whites is only 21.7 percent. (see Table 1) The data suggest that nonwhite union members receive a particular boost in their wealth because they see larger increases in pay, benefits, and employment stability than white union members. This is primarily a result of the fact that nonwhite workers work more frequently than whites in low-paying jobs with few benefits, so they often have much more to gain.[10](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-10) This disparity in working conditions is due to a wide array of factors, including but not limited to unequal access to education, occupational segregation, and discrimination.[11](https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/reports/2018/09/04/454781/union-membership-narrows-racial-wealth-gap-families-color/#fn-454781-11) Unions help all workers, and they do the most for those with less advantages. As a result, union membership can help shrink that racial gap in labor market outcomes. And this partial equalization translates into a boost in median wealth for nonwhite union families.

#### Union leaders have both ideological and pragmatic reasons to support across racial lines. Increasing union power allows for them to better influence the workplace to protect all members.

Frymer & Grumbach write this year: [Paul Frymer is a professor in the Department of Politics at Princeton University, Jacob M. Grumbach is an Assitant Professor of Political Science at the University of Washington, Published: January 2021, “Labor Unions and White Racial Politics”, American Journal of Political Science, https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/VJUOOV]

In recent decades, union leaders have had both ideological commitments and strategic reasons for building an interracial coalition. Union leaders are often ideologically committed to egalitarianism, and such a commitment can influence the rank and file. As Ahlquist and Levi (2013, 6) argue, unions politically mobilize their members more effectively when they have "an ideologically motivated founding leadership cohort who devises organizational rules that facilitate both industrial success and coordinated expectations about the leaders' political objectives." This is how some unions, such as the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), "produce membership willing to self-sacrifice on behalf of a wide range of political and social justice issues" (1). Dependent on context, union leaders' goal of maintaining and expanding their organizations also gives them strategic incentives to reduce racial animus among their rank and file.In the pre-civil-rights era, union leaders representing all-white workforces often felt the need to avoid the subject of racial diversity in order to maintain solidarity within their membership, particularly during drives to establish a collective bargaining agreement (Frymer 2005). With frequent racial segregation in employment and larger majorities of white workers, it may have made strategic sense for union leaders to increase the salience of class identity at the expense of racial identity. But even during this time, it was dependent on the context of the specific workforce. In the 1940s, CIO unions in particular saw the activism of African American workers on factory floors in the auto and steel industries, leading union and civil rights leaders alike to embrace the other movements as a way to gain members for their own (Lichtenstein 2001). As the labor movement has become more diverse in recent decades, the incentives for union leaders have increasingly changed with it. Changing demographics led many service industry unions such as AFSCME, UNITE HERE, and SEIU to embrace both racial minority and immigrant workforces. Starting in the 1980s, the AFL- CIO began to endorse pro-immigration legislative policies and agency rules in response to the rising numbers of undocumented Latino workers who were joining union campaigns (Fine and Tichenor 2009). To secure more union election victories and collective bargaining agreements, its leaders increasingly felt a strategic need to embrace interracial solidarity. National union conventions are increasingly multilingual, with large immigrant populations in many service industries now representing just about every part of the world. Starting in the 1990s, the AFL-CIO pushed the National Labor Relations Board to recognize the solidaristic benefits of racially based union campaigns centered around African American and Latino workforces, and influenced the board to cooperate with immigration officials to protect undocumented workers during union activity (Frymer 2008).

#### Strikes can push back against monopsony power to ensure workers see the benefits of production

**Kate Bahn says in 2019:**

[August 29, 2019, "The once and future role of strikes in ensuring U.S. worker power," Equitable Growth, https://equitablegrowth.org/the-once-and-future-role-of-strikes-in-ensuring-u-s-worker-power/]

In the United States, Labor Day, which falls on the first Monday of September, is when we honor the history of the U.S. labor movement in striving for benefits and empowerment of workers across the economy. Strikes play an important role in empowering workers vis-à-vis their employers. By withdrawing their labor power, workers are able to balance the scales against the owners of capital, who rely on workers for production and providing services. Strikes have declined in frequency, popularity, and success over the past four decades, yet today, amid rising economic inequality, they are once again becoming an important tool in exercising worker power to ensure that the gains of profitability and economic growth can be broadly shared. The history of strikes in the United States Washington University in St. Louis sociologist Jake Rosenfeld examines the role of work stoppages in his recent book What Unions No Longer Do, and finds that strikes at large firms began declining in the mid-1970s, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Work Stoppages file. Rosenfeld then digs deeper to estimate the trends of strikes at firms both large and small by calculating a broader measure using data from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service from 1984 to 2002. He finds a peak in strikes in the late 1980s and then a stark decline after. The decline of strikes is a result of a variety of factors. One is the increased use of replacement hires, especially after the PATCO strike of 1981, when President Ronald Reagan summarily fired 11,000 air traffic controllers who were striking for higher pay and a reduced work week. President Reagan quickly replaced those striking workers with 4,000 air traffic control supervisors and Army members, sending a powerful message to U.S. workers about the use of strikes in labor disputes. But even before this historic turning point, the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 limited the ability of workers to strike. This included restrictions on secondary boycotts and picketing, both of which make striking especially difficult in today’s increasingly fissured workplace, where you cannot strike against the corporation that is at least partly responsible for your workplace conditions but not technically your direct employer. For example, workers at the franchises of McDonald’s Corporation who attempt to unionize are not protected by the Fair Labor Standards Act when picketing against McDonald’s because they are, most commonly, the employees of a franchisor, rather than of the main corporation. These factors, along with a general increasing business hostility toward unions and lack of enforcement of labor protections, have ultimately made strikes less effective as a tool for collective bargaining in the United States. Increasing interest in unions among U.S. workers today At the same time, there is an increasing consensus today that unions are a positive force for increasing worker power and balancing against economic inequality. In polling of support for unions and specific aspects of collective bargaining, Equitable Growth grantee Alex Hertel-Fernandez of Columbia University, along with William Kimball and Thomas Kochan of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, find that support for unions has grown overall, with nearly half of U.S. workers in 2018 saying they would vote for a union if given the opportunity. This is a significant increase from one-third of workers supporting unionization in 1995. According to their research, workers primarily value unions’ role in collective bargaining and ensuring access to benefits such as healthcare, retirement, and unemployment insurance. Strikes have historically been one of the strongest tools used by unions to ensure they have power to engage in collective bargaining. But striking was viewed as a negative attribute in the survey done by Hertel-Fernandez, Kimball, and Kochan. Yet, when they presented workers with the hypothetical choice of a union exercising strike power with other attributes of unions, such as collective bargaining, support increased. But strikes, of course, do not take place in a bubble. The wider climate of worker bargaining power and institutions that support labor organizing plays a role in making this historically crucial tool effective again. So, too, does the power of employers to resist these organizing efforts when the labor market lacks competition that would increase worker bargaining power. The role of monopsony power in the U.S. labor market Monopsony power is a situation in the labor market where individual employers exercise effective control over wage setting rather than wages being set by competitive forces (akin to monopoly power, where a limited number of firms exercise pricing power over their customers.) In a new Equitable Growth working paper by Mark Paul of New College of Florida and Mark Stelzner of Connecticut College, the role of collective action in offsetting employer monopsony power is examined in the context of institutional support for labor. Paul and Stelzner construct an abstract model with the assumption of monopsonistic markets and follow the originator of monopsony theory Joan Robinson’s insight that unions can serve as a countervailing power against employer power. Their model shows that institutional support for unions, such as legislation protecting the right to organize, is necessary for this dynamic process of balancing employers’ monopsony power. In an accompanying column, the two researchers write that they “find that a lack of institutional support will devastate unions’ ability to function as a balance to firms’ monopsony power, potentially with major consequences … In turn, labor market outcomes will be less socially efficient.”

1. https://www.google.com/search?q=equality+definition&sxsrf=AOaemvJe0fnDyb24TxXMIWzoEfLw-xeNoA%3A1636510384799&source=hp&ei=sCqLYaeTLvuI9u8PoZiEwA8&iflsig=ALs-wAMAAAAAYYs4wB-nr9gQzuRlmV0xQR7F3JWZJGtJ&oq=equality+definition&gs\_lcp=Cgdnd3Mtd2l6EAMyCAgAEIAEELEDMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEMgUIABCABDIFCAAQgAQyBQgAEIAEOgQIIxAnOgUIABCRAjoRCC4QgAQQsQMQgwEQxwEQ0QM6CwgAEIAEELEDEIMBOgsILhCABBCxAxCDAToECAAQQzoOCC4QgAQQsQMQxwEQ0QM6CAguEIAEELEDOgcILhCxAxBDOg0ILhCxAxDHARCjAhBDOgsIABCABBCxAxDJAzoHCAAQsQMQQzoLCC4QgAQQxwEQrwFQAFj\_E2DMFmgAcAB4AYABrgGIAfcOkgEEMTMuNpgBAKABAQ&sclient=gws-wiz&ved=0ahUKEwinq56h3Iz0AhV7hP0HHSEMAfgQ4dUDCAk&uact=5 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)