

# Cabot RH Affirmative

## 1AC

Cabot affirms; Resolved, “A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike”.

Before we begin, the affirmative provides the following definitions;

A just government is defined as, “A government that fulfills its social contract with it’s people based upon a Lockean social contract”.

Government is defined as, “A body in control over a large group of people, officially recognized by United Nations”

Strike is best defined as, “A peaceful organized refusal to do work, in order to improve one or more of the following criterion; Work conditions, pay, or to receive benefits, i.e. healthcare”

Worker is defined as, “A person or party providing goods or services to another person or party for compensation”

Our value is Justice per the phrase just government.

In order to uphold Justice, the criterion for today’s debate is securing human rights.

Observation one is: All work has value.

Observation two is: Workers control their work output.

Advantage one is Marxism;

Locke’s social contract holds that people willingly create governments in order to protect their fundamental rights, which include Life, Liberty, and Property. Therefore, governments ought to protect property rights, in order to fulfill the Social Contract put forth by the people.

Work has inherent value, and this value is exploited;

**Kenton, W. (2021, November 11).** *Karl Marx*. Investopedia. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/k/karl-marx.asp>.

Like the other classical economists, Karl Marx believed in the labor theory of value to explain relative differences in market prices. This theory stated that the value of a produced economic good can be measured objectively by the average number of labor hours required to produce it. In other words, if a table takes twice as long to make as a chair, then the table should be considered twice as valuable. Marx understood the labor theory better than his predecessors (even Adam Smith) and contemporaries, and presented a devastating intellectual challenge to laissez-faire economists in Das Kapital: If goods and services tend to be sold at their true objective labor values as measured in labor hours, how do any capitalists enjoy profits? It must mean, Marx concluded, that capitalists [are] underpaying or overworking, and thereby exploiting laborers to drive down the cost of production.

Because work has value, it means that said work is the property of the worker. After all, the work would not exist without the labor. Therefore, governments ought to protect the rights of workers by enabling them to have the right to control the value of their work. The affirmative advocates for the rights of workers, as strikes, by definition, can be used to increase their pay.

Advantage two is Improving working conditions.

Working conditions are horrifying throughout the world. The affirmative isolates 3 specific examples from around the world.

Subpoint A is Sanitation Workers.

Sanitation Workers are one of the most necessary jobs around the world, as without them, the world would face a huge increase in disease, and yet we treat these workers poorly.

Sanitation Workers are negatively treated in developing countries.

**World Health Organization. (2018, November 14).** *New report exposes horror of working conditions for millions of sanitation workers in the developing world.* World Health Organization. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/news/item/14-11-2019-new-report-exposes-horror-of-working-conditions-for-millions-of-sanitation-workers-in-the-developing-world>.

The report on the plight of sanitation workers in the developing world is jointly authored by the International Labour Organization, WaterAid, World Bank and World Health Organization to raise awareness of the de-humanizing working conditions and to push for change. It is the most extensive global study to date on the issue, and part of a growing body of work on sanitation workers. Poor sanitation causes up to 432 000 diarrhoeal deaths annually and is

linked to the transmission of other diseases like cholera, dysentery, typhoid, hepatitis A and polio. Sanitation workers are the people who work in jobs such as cleaning toilets, emptying pits and septic tanks, cleaning sewers and manholes and operating pumping stations and treatment plants. They play a valuable role in improving the health and well-being of populations around the world and have the same right to good health. Waste must be correctly treated before being disposed of or used. However, workers often come into direct contact with human waste, working with no equipment or protection to remove it by hand which expose them to a long list of health hazards and diseases. The work is often informal with workers subject to no rights or social protections. Pay can be inconsistent or non-existent – some

workers report being paid in food rather than money. Sanitation work is often socially stigmatized and done at night. The report highlights examples of good practice, where sanitation work has been officially acknowledged and formalized. It also lays out four key action areas for countries and development partners: reform of policy, legislation and regulation; developing and adopting operational guidelines for workers; advocacy and empowerment of sanitation workers to claim their rights; and strengthening evidence on the status of sanitation work and good practice. In South Africa for example, public and private employees follow national labour standards and have proper equipment and training. The World Health Organization is helping to strengthen national capacities, focusing on ensuring protections of sanitation workers are included in national sanitation policies and risk-assessment and management at a local level. WHO will also work with partners to quantify the global sanitation workforce and try to estimate the burden of disease for sanitation workers. Many of the challenges sanitation workers face stem from their lack of visibility in society. Few countries in the developing world have any guidelines to protect these workers.

Sanitation workers have little to no rights concerning their own health, and because of it, they're inherently negatively impacted. Developing countries comprise almost 70% of the world population according to the United Nations. Because of this, it's obvious that sanitary workers are negatively impacted, and they work in the majority of the world. Allowing this to continue is inherently unjust, as it's a restriction of their access to the fundamental right of Life.

Subpoint B is Amazon Workers.

Conklin, A. (2021, March 28). *Amazon aware that workers allegedly pee in water bottles, documents show; company pushes back*. Fox Business. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.foxbusiness.com/technology/amazon-workers-pee-water-bottles>.

Amazon is aware of its employees reportedly peeing in water bottles and defecating in bags, documents show. The tech giant suggested in a tweet to Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., that the multiple reports published in recent years -- alleging poor working conditions at Amazon and that employees complained of peeing in water bottles or not having enough time to use the restroom -- were false. "You don't really believe the peeing in bottles thing, do you?" Amazon tweeted Thursday. "If that were true, nobody would work for us. The truth is that we have over a million incredible employees around the world who are proud of what they do, and have great wages and health care from day one." The tweet came in response to criticism from Pocan, who accused the company of putting on the facade of being a "progressive workplace." "Paying workers \$15/hr doesn't make you a 'progressive workplace' when you union-bust [and] make workers urinate in water bottles," the congressman said. Internal documents obtained by digital investigative news outlet The Intercept, and retweeted by New York Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, show that at least some Amazon management teams were aware of the fact that employees -- and in particular, delivery drivers -- were urinating in water bottles and defecating in bags as a result of not having enough time to use a restroom. One Pittsburgh-based Amazon employee sent a document labeled "confidential" to the outlet that lists behavior violations, including "public urination" and "public defecation." The same employee shared an email from an Amazon manager to employees with The Intercept condemning the third instance of a driver defecating in a bag in two months. "This evening, an associate discovered human feces in an Amazon bag that was returned to station by a driver," the email reads, according to The Intercept. "This is the [third] occasion in the last [two] months when bags have been returned to [the] station with poop inside. We understand that [driver associates] may have emergencies while on-road, and especially

during Covid, DAs have struggled to find bathrooms while delivering." The email continues: "We've noticed an uptick recently of all kinds of unsanitary garbage being left inside bags: used masks, gloves, bottles of urine. By scanning the QR code on the bag, we can easily identify the DA who was in possession of the bag last. These behaviors are unacceptable and will result in Tier 1 Infractions going forward. ... I know it may seem obvious, or like something you shouldn't need to coach, but please be explicit when communicating the message that they CANNOT poop, or leave bottles of urine inside bags."

Workers inside Amazon facilities are treated with inhumane standards. Furthermore, this behavior can be attributed to Amazon facilities throughout the world, including first world countries with strong work laws. Workers need to have their fundamental rights to health protected, and striking is an obvious way to this, as it raises public awareness to growing issues.

Subpoint C is the European Meat Sector.

The affirmative provides a specific example to Europe in how workers were exploited with poor working conditions and suffered because of it.

**Askew, K. (2020, June 26).** *'appalling' conditions blamed for spread of covid-19 in meat sector: 'a bleak picture of a sector in need of urgent and serious reform'*. foodnavigator.com. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2020/06/26/Appalling-conditions-blamed-for-spread-of-COVID-19-in-meat-sector>.

A new report claims that 'appalling' working, employment and housing conditions in the meat sector are why meat processing plants have become 'vectors for the spread of COVID-19'. Coronavirus outbreaks continue

to ravage meat processing facilities across Europe. **Outbreaks** - particularly in Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK - **have highlighted 'exploitative' working conditions and 'insufficient' safety measures**, the European Federation of Food, Agriculture and Tourism Trade Unions (EFFAT) has suggested. In a new study, **EFFAT outlined the effects of coronavirus on the meat sector in various countries across Europe, providing an overview of the working arrangements and business practices pursued by meat companies 'to cut costs and escape employer liability'. "It paints a bleak picture of a sector in need of urgent and serious reform,** while highlighting instances of good practice as evidence once again of the crucial role for collective bargaining in setting decent labour standards and ensuring fair competition,"

EFFAT said of the report. The federation of trade unions hit out at 'exploitative' working conditions, including up to 16 hour working days, low pay, illegal wage deductions and job insecurity. It also flagged 'overcrowded accommodation' used by meat processors to house migrant workers, who, it said, are subject to 'unequal treatment and abuse'.

**The European Union's meatpacking industry employs 350,000 people. According to data from Greenpeace-backed project Unearthed, at least 37 COVID outbreaks have been reported in abattoirs and meat-packing plants across Europe since March, leading to at least nine factory closures and more than 4,000 workers becoming infected.**

"Meat – and all agri-food – workers have shown astounding dedication to their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic – too often risking their health due to lack of effective health protection measures in order to provide food for our table. We are in their debt," EFFAT General Secretary Kristjan Bragason stressed. "The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed to a wider audience issues that EFFAT and its affiliates have been calling out to the EU Institutions and national governments over many years. In many ways it is sad that something as tragic as coronavirus had to happen to raise awareness of the systemic issues affecting the meat sector, such as the abusive sub-contracting which has so harmed numerous workers, especially in Germany."

Subcontracting remains a common practice in Germany's meat sector – the worst hit by COVID in Europe. EFFAT noted that people employed by subcontractors generally work between 48 and 65 hours per week. Meat workers directly employed by companies normally work around 40 hours per week and maximum up to 48 hours. For subcontracted workers, the working day can be up to 16 hours, six days per week, according to the union. Wage disparities with workers directly employed by meat companies are also evident. Subcontracted workers earn on average 40% to 50% less than meat workers directly employed by meat companies, the union noted. Housing conditions were also depicted as 'extremely poor'. "Workers employed by subcontractors frequently live in overcrowded flats with shared bathrooms and with even up to five or six people in one dormitory. Accommodation is provided directly or indirectly by the subcontractor. In other words, the employer is also the landlord," EFFAT noted. The situation has contributed to highly publicised outbreaks of COVID-19 across Germany's meat sector. The biggest outbreak was recently reported at a Tönnies factory in Rheda-Wiedenbrueck (North Rhine-Westphalia). The slaughterhouse, which is considered the biggest in Europe, employs 7000 workers and more than 1,550 tested positive for COVID-19. The site was shut down last Thursday (18 June). Earlier in May, following an outbreak at a meat processing plant in the town of Coesfeld, near the western German city of Münster, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia became the first to activate an "emergency mechanism" and delay the loosening of lockdown restrictions in the area. The localised spike in cases came after a test of 200 employees at the Westfleisch meat processing plant revealed 151 to be positive for COVID-19. The plant was then shut down. Elsewhere, 109 workers tested positive at a plant in Bad Bramstedt in the district of Segeberg. Over 200 hundred Romanian workers tested positive for COVID-19 at a slaughterhouse in Birkenfeld, in the Baden-Wurttemberg region. And a plant in Schleswig-Holstein was closed after 128 employees tested positive.

Workers in the European Union are facing workplaces that breed disease, and are easily spread to disease. Not only that, but workers are given meager pay for their work. The European Union is notorious for having no leniency for strikes, and it's obvious that there is no other ways, or else they would have been tried at this point.

The impact for all of these subpoints is simple, quality of life. There is a lack of access in the status quo to good working conditions, along with adequate pay. This inherently violates the very rights that governments are formed to protect, which is clear from the Locke Social Contract, Life, Liberty, and Property. People are forced into poor working environments because of poverty, which removes their right to life. Then, they're forced to accept they can't strike, which violates their right to Liberty, and then their work is exploited, which is inherently their property, violating their right to property.

Thus the plan, Governments ought to recognize the workers unconditional right to strike.

Striking is a fundamental right to workers:

**Bernard Gernigon.** (2000, July). *ILO principles concerning the right to strike*. ILO principles Concerning the right to Strike. Retrieved October 25, 2021, from

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed\\_norm/@normes/documents/publication/wcms\\_087987.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@normes/documents/publication/wcms_087987.pdf)

From its very earliest days, during its second meeting,

in 1952, the Committee on Freedom of Association declared strike action to be a right and laid down the basic principle underlying this right, from which all others to some extent derive, and which recognizes the right to strike to be one of the principal means by which workers and their associations may legitimately promote and defend their economic and social interests (ILO, 1996d, paras. 473- 475).

Over the years, in line with this principle, the Committee on Freedom of Association has recognized that strike action is a right and not simply a social act, and has also: 1. made it clear it is a right which workers and their organizations (trade unions, federations and confederations) are entitled to enjoy; 2. reduced the number of categories of workers who may be deprived of this right, as well as the legal restrictions on its exercise, which should not be excessive; 3. linked the exercise of the right to strike to the objective of promoting and defending the economic and social interests of workers (which criterion excludes strikes of a purely political nature from the scope of international protection provided by the ILO, although the Committee makes no direct statement or indication regarding sympathy strikes other than that they cannot be banned outright; this matter will be examined subsequently); 4. stated that the legitimate exercise of the right to strike should not entail prejudicial penalties of any sort, which would imply acts of anti-union discrimination.

The impact is simple judge, the right to strike accesses all fundamental rights put forth by Locke. By ensuring that workers have the right to strike, we improve work conditions, which improves health, which is their right under Life. It ensures that workers have freedom in their work, which is their right under Liberty. It ensures that a workers work is protected, which is their right under property. Furthermore, it helps ensure better economic prosperity, which is the right of the worker under property. As such Judge, vote affirmative, as we advocate for the rights of the people, which is necessary to build a just and moral society.