**Affirmative**

**Stock Aff**

**FW**

**I value morality as ought implies a moral obligation**

**The standard is minimizing material and structural violence. Prefer:**

**Structural violence and oppression are based in moral exclusion, which is fundamentally flawed because exclusion is based on arbitrarily perceived differences.**

**Opotow 01** [Susan Opotow is a social and organizational psychologist. Her work examines the intersection of conflict, justice, and identity as they give rise to moral exclusion -- seeing others as outside the scope of justice and as eligible targets of discrimination, exploitation, hate, or violence. She studies moral exclusion and moral inclusion in such everyday contexts as schooling, environmental and public policy conflict, and in more violent contexts, such as deadly wars and the post-war period. She has guest edited The Journal of Social Issues and Social Justice Research and co-edited Identity and the Natural Environment: The Psychological Significance of Nature (MIT Press, 2003). She is associate editor of Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology and Past President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues], “Social Injustice”, Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Centuryl Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2001,

Both structural and direct violence result from moral justifications and rationalizations. Morals are the norms, rights, entitlements, obligations, responsibilities, and duties that shape our sense of justice and guide our behavior with others (Deutsch, 1985). Morals operationalize our sense of justice by identifying what we owe to whom, whose needs, views, and well-being count, and whose do not. Our morals apply to people we value, which define who is inside our scope of justice (or “moral community”), such as family members, friends, compatriots, and coreligionists (Deutsch, 1974, 1985; Opotow, 1990; Staub, 1989). We extend considerations of fairness to them, share community resources with them, and make sacrifices for them that foster their well- being (Opotow, 1987, 1993). We see other kinds of people such as enemies or strangers outside our scope of justice; they are morally excluded. Gender, ethnicity, religious identity, age, mental capacity, sexual orientation, and political affiliation are some criteria used to define moral exclusion. Excluded people can be hated and viewed as “vermin” or “plague” or they can be seen as expendable non-entities. In either case, disadvantage, hardship, and exploitation inflicted on them seems normal, accept- able, and just—as “the way things are” or the way they “ought to be.” Fairness and deserving seem irrelevant when applied to them and harm befalling them elicits neither remorse, outrage, nor demands for restitution; instead, harm inflicted on them can inspire celebration. Many social issues and controversies, such as aid to school drop-outs, illegal immigrants, “welfare moms,” people who are homeless, substance abusers, and those infected with HIV are essentially moral debates about who deserves public resources, and thus, ultimately, about moral inclusion. When we see other people’s circumstances to be a result of their moral failings, moral exclusion seems warranted. But when we see others’ circumstances as a result of structural violence, moral exclusion seems unwarranted and unjust. While it is psychologically more comfortable to perceive harm-doers to be evil or demented, we each have boundaries for justice. Our moral obligations are stronger toward those close to us and weaker toward those who are distant. When the media reports suffering and death in Cambodia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, we often fail—as a nation, as com- munities, and as individuals—to protest or to provide aid. Rationalizations include insufficient knowledge of the political dynamics, the futility of doing much of use, and not knowing where to begin. Our tendency to exclude people is fostered by a number of normal perceptual tendencies: 1. Social categorization. Our tendency to group and classify objects, including social categories, is ordinarily innocuous, facilitating acquisition of information and memory (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). Social categorizations can become invidious, however, when they serve as a basis for rationalizing structural inequality and social injustice. For example, race is a neutral physical characteristic, but it often becomes a value-loaded label, which generates unequal treatment and outcomes (Archer, 1985; Tajfel, 1978). 2. Evaluative judgments. Our tendency to make simple, evaluative, dichotomous judgments (e.g., good and bad, like and dislike) is a fundamental feature of human perception. Evaluative judgments have cognitive, affective, and moral components. From a behavioral, evolutionary, and social learning perspective, evaluative judgments have positive adaptive value because they provide feedback that protects our well-being (Edwards & von Hippel, 1995; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Evaluative judgments can support structural violence and exclusionary thinking, however, when they lend a negative slant to perceived difference. In-group-out-group and we-them thinking can result from social comparisons made on dimensions that maximize a positive social identity for oneself or one’s group at the expense of others (Tajfel, 1982).

**The structural violence of inequality outweighs other impacts—there is an ethical obligation to address it.**

**Ansell 17** — David A. Ansell, Senior Vice President, Associate Provost for Community Health Equity, and Michael E. Kelly Professor of Medicine at Rush University Medical Center (Chicago), holds an M.D. from the State University of New York Upstate Medical University College of Medicine, 2017 (“American Roulette,” *The Death Gap: How Inequality Kills*, Published by the University of Chicago Press, ISBN 9780226428291, p. kindle 307-363)

There are many different kinds of violence. Some are obvious: punches, attacks, gunshots, explosions. These are the kinds of interpersonal violence that we tend to hear about in the news. Other kinds of violence are intimate and emotional. But the **deadliest** and most thoroughgoing kind of violence is woven into the fabric of American society. It exists when some groups have more access to goods, resources, and opportunities than other groups, including health and life itself. This violence delivers **specific blows against particular bodies in particular neighborhoods**. This unequal advantage and violence is built into the very rules that govern our society. In the absence of this violence, **large numbers of Americans would be able to live fuller and longer lives**. This kind of violence is called structural violence, because it is embedded in the very laws, policies, and rules that govern day-to-day life.8 It is thecumulative impact of laws and social and economic policies and practices that render some Americans less able to access resources and opportunities than others. This inequity of advantage is not a result of the individual’s personal abilities but is built into the systems that govern society. Often it is a product of **racism**, **gender**, and **income inequality**. The diseases and premature mortality that Windora and many of my patients experienced were, in the words of Dr. Paul Farmer, “biological reflections of social fault lines.”9 As a result of these fault lines, a disproportional burden of illness, suffering, and premature mortality falls on certain neighborhoods, like Windora’s. Structural violence can overwhelm an individual’s ability to live a free, unfettered, healthy life. As I ran to evaluate Windora, I knew that her stroke was caused in part by lifelong exposure to suffering, racism, and economic deprivation. Worse, the poverty of West Humboldt Park that contributed to her illness is directly and inextricably related to the massive concentration of wealth and power in other neighborhoods just miles away in Chicago’s Gold Coast and suburbs. That concentration of wealth could not have occurred without laws, policies, and practices that favored some at the expense of others. Those laws, policies, and practices could not have been passed or enforced if access to political and economic power had not been concentrated in the hands of a few. Yet these political and economic structures have become so firmly entrenched (in habits, social relations, economic arrangements, institutional practices, law, and policy) that they have become part of the matrix of American society. The rules that govern day-to-day life were written to benefit a small elite at the expense of people like Windora and her family. These rules and structures are powerful destructive forces. The same structuresthat render life predictable, secure, comfortable, and pleasant for many destroy the lives of others like Windora through **suffering**, **poverty**, **ill health**, and **violence**. These structures are neither natural nor neutral. The results of structural violence can be very specific. In Windora’s case, stroke precursors like chronic stress, poverty, and uncontrolled hypertension run rampant in neighborhoods like hers. Windora’s illness was caused by neither her cultural traits nor the failure of her will. Her stroke was caused in part by inequity. She is one of the lucky ones, though, because even while structural violence ravages her neighborhood, it also abets the concentration of expensive stroke- intervention services in certain wealthy teaching hospitals like mine. If I can get to her in time, we can still help her. Income Inequality and Life Inequality Of course, Windora is not the only person struggling on account of structural violence. Countless neighborhoods nationwide are suffering from it, and people are dying **needlessly young** as a result. The magnitude of this excess mortality is mind-boggling. In 2009 my friend Dr. Steve Whitman asked a simple question, “How many extra black people died in Chicago each year, just because they do not have the same health outcomes as white Chicagoans?” When the Chicago Sun-Times got wind of his results, it ran them on the front page in bold white letters on a black background: “HEALTH CARE GAP KILLS 3200 Black Chicagoans and the Gap is Growing.” The paper styled the headline to look like the declaration of war that it should have been. In fact, we did find ourselves at warnot long ago, when almost 3,000 Americans were killed. That was September 11, 2001. That tragedy propelled the country to war. Yet when it comes to the premature deaths of urban Americans, no disaster area has been declared. No federal troops have been called up. No acts of Congress have been passed. Yet this disaster is **even worse**: those 3,200 black people were in Chicago alone, in just one year. Nationwide each year, more than **60,000** black people die prematurely because of inequality.10 While blacks suffer the most from this, it is not just an issue of racism, though racism has been a unique and powerful transmitter of violence in America for over four hundred years.11 Beyond racism, poverty and income inequality perpetuated by exploitative market capitalism are singular agents of transmission of **disease and early death**. As a result, there is a new and alarming pattern of declining life expectancy among white Americans as well. Deaths from drug overdoses in young white Americans ages 25 to 34 have exploded to levels not seen since the AIDS epidemic. This generation is the first since the Vietnam War era to experience higher death rates than the prior generation.12 White Americans ages 45 to 54 have experienced skyrocketing premature death rates as well, something not seen in any other developed nation.13 White men in some Appalachian towns live on average twenty years less than white men a half-day’s drive away in the suburbs of Washington, DC. Men in McDowell County, West Virginia, can look forward to a life expectancy only slightly better than that of Haitians.14 But those statistics reflect averages, and every death from structural violence is **a person**. When these illnesses and deaths are occurring one at a time in neighborhoods that society has decided not to care about—neighborhoods populated by poor, black, or brown people—they seem easy to overlook, especially if you are among the fortunate few who are doing incredibly well. The tide of prosperity in America has lifted some boats while others have swamped. Paul Farmer, the physician-anthropologist who founded Partners in Health, an international human rights agency, reflects on the juxtaposition of “unprecedented bounty and untold penury”: “It stands to reason that as beneficiaries of growing inequality, we do not like to be reminded of misery of squalor and failure. Our popular culture provides us with no shortage of anesthesia.”15 That people suffer and die prematurely because of inequality is **wrong**. It is wrong from an **ethical** perspective. It is wrong from a **fairness** perspective. And it is wrong because **we have the means to fix it**.

**C1: Racial Inequality**

**PoC are already unequal in the economy. Bahn et. al. 20**

**Bahn et. al.** “Wage discrimination and the exploitation of workers in the U.S. labor market.” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 15 Sep. **2020,** <https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/>. **Kate Bahn** is the director of labor market policy and economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. Her areas of research include gender, race, and ethnicity in the labor market, care work, and monopsonistic labor markets. //ech

Not only do **Black and Latinx workers experience high levels of income inequality in the United States, they also face an**[**even wider wealth divide**](https://equitablegrowth.org/reconsidering-progress-this-juneteenth-eight-graphics-that-underscore-the-economic-racial-inequality-black-americans-face-in-the-united-states/)**with their White peers**.[27](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-27) In [2016](https://equitablegrowth.org/the-distribution-of-wealth-in-the-united-states-and-implications-for-a-net-worth-tax/), White families had median wealth of $171,000, while Black families’ median wealth was just $17,000—or almost 90 percent less—and Latinx families’ median wealth was $21,000.[28](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-28) (See Figure 1.) **This gap simply cannot be explained by differing levels of education or income: The wealth divide in the United States has not decreased over time, even as Black Americans have achieved higher levels of education and income.** (See Figure 1.) One contributor to the racial wealth divide is the [lower rates of homeownership](https://equitablegrowth.org/reconsidering-progress-this-juneteenth-eight-graphics-that-underscore-the-economic-racial-inequality-black-americans-face-in-the-united-states/) among Black Americans.[29](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-29) This divide in large part is due to the systematic blocking of Black homeownership through federal policies that fostered redlining and discrimination in housing, among other barriers to access—discrimination that began to diminish only beginning in the late 1970s and well after the wealth-creating housing boom of the previous three decades that accrued to White homeowners. And even today, while discrimination and prevention of homeownership based on race is technically illegal, the reality is that those Black and Latinx Americans who are able to purchase homes face [higher property tax burdens](https://equitablegrowth.org/misvaluations-in-local-property-tax-assessments-cause-the-tax-burden-to-fall-more-heavily-on-black-latinx-homeowners/) than their White neighbors, even within the same local property tax jurisdictions. Black Americans also face [lower rates of intergenerational mobility](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/are-todays-inequalities-limiting-tomorrows-opportunities/), or the likelihood that a child will earn more than their parents when they are adults.[31](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-31) And, of course, the [disproportionate incarceration of Black Americans](https://equitablegrowth.org/overcoming-social-exclusion-addressing-race-and-criminal-justice-policy-in-the-united-states/) contributes to racial economic disparities, not only keeping a higher proportion of Black people out of the labor force for longer and more periods of time, but also [lowering their credit scores](https://equitablegrowth.org/the-never-ending-cycle-incarceration-credit-scores-and-wealth-accumulation-in-the-united-states/) and reducing their wealth-accumulation opportunities.[32](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-32) **All of these systemic hurdles put Black workers at a disadvantage in the labor market by lowering their access to wealth and wealth-building opportunities**. Our new theoretical model shows that **wealth is an important factor in a worker’s ability to change jobs and weather the potential income shocks that come with searching for and switching to new jobs.** These shocks can be as small as the lost wages from taking time off to interview or a delay in pay when transitioning to a new role, or as large as a longer period of time off resulting from an unexpected delay or issue with the transition to a new job**. As the persistent racial wealth gap in the United States indicates, Black and Latinx workers—who have less access to wealth—are less able to get through potential household financial crises than their otherwise-identical White peers. This means that similar workers of different races and ethnicities have different ease and ability to navigate the labor market, making Black and Latinx workers less sensitive to wage differences between their job and others when the cost and risk of leaving their job is too high. If an employer recognizes this disparity (or holds racist views, which leads to a similar low-wage outcome), then the employer will exploit Black and Latinx workers more by offering them lower wages than their White colleagues, expanding the racial wage divide.**

**The RTS is the fundamental right for union negotiation**

**Myall, James.** “Right to Strike Would Level the Playing Field for Public Workers, with Benefits for All of Us.” Maine Center for Economic Policy, 17 Apr. **2019,** https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/.[James Myall](https://www.mecep.org/author/james-myall/) is a Policy analyst for [@MECEP1](https://twitter.com/MECEP1) . Member, Maine Permanent Commission on Racial, Indigenous & Tribal Pops. British. Recovering historian. //ear

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]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/#_edn2) 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. Notes [[i]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/#_ednref1) MECEP analysis of US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group data, 1998-2017 via the Integrated Public Use Microdata System. [[ii]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/#_ednref2) Jeffrey Keefe, “Laws Enabling Public-Sector Collective Bargaining Have Not Led to Excessive Public-Sector Pay,” Economic Policy Institute, Oct 16, 2015. Web. Available at <https://www.epi.org/publication/laws-enabling-public-sector-collective-bargaining-have-not-led-to-excessive-public-sector-pay/>

**Collective action i.e. unions participating in strikes, is essential to social movements. Dixon and Roscigno 03**

Marc **Dixon**, Vincent J. **Roscigno** “Status, Networks, and Social Movement Participation: The Case of Striking Workers.” American Journal of Sociology, May. **2003,** <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/VRoscigno/publication/254316446_Status_Networks_and_Social_Movement_Participation_The_Case_of_Striking_Workers/links/54ce46a40cf298d656606f5d/Status-Networks-and-Social-Movement-Participation-The-Case-of-Striking-Workers.pdf>. Vincent J. Roscigno **has been a professor at** The Ohio State University,Department of Sociology**,** Columbus, United States for 25 years. Marc Dixon is a Professor and Chair, Department of Sociology with a B.A. University of Vermont, M.A. Ohio State University, and Ph.D. Ohio State University. //ech

This article extends the understanding of social movement participation, and strike action specifically. **Building on prior social movement and labor analyses, we suggested that participation in collective action will be patterned by both calculations associated with status position and the embeddedness of actors in networks—networks that may condition decision making processes through information, grievance sharing, and identity building or that may more directly pressure individuals to act.** The case of a labor strike on a large university campus provided the opportunity to address these questions with appropriate and unique data. These data include straightforward measures of participation, demographics on participants and nonparticipants alike, and network indicators that are meaningful given our population of interest and the actual form of mobilization examined. **Findings revealed the importance of background and workplace status, and their associations, for individual strike involvement.** **African American and other racial and ethnic minority employees displayed higher levels of strike participation relative to whites. This is partially attributable to their disparate concentration in lower-paying custodial work.** Here, the absolute income costs of participation are lower and wage grievances arguably more pronounced—something quite evident in our qualitative observations of protest events and pickets. Maintenance and especially skilled workers, in contrast, experienced a contradictory intrastatus tension between rewards on the one hand (which decrease strike support) and **union loyalty and history (which increase strike support)** on the other. Indeed, once we accounted for the depressant effect of their higher incomes, these workers were the most likely to strike. Importantly, as noted in our background discussion, this particular mobilization framed issues broadly **and** mostly in material terms. **This served to bridge potential interstatus divides between black and white workers and between low- and high-skilled workers.** Such findings inform labor and social movement research given the explicit focus on the complexities of class and other background statuses in relation to action. Labor research, because of data limitations, has been somewhat limited in this regard to examinations of single occupations or relatively homogeneous workforces. Thus, variation in status impact and mobilization potential among advantaged and disadvantaged groups is often overlooked. This is unfortunate, **as the status divisions and pulls specified here are relevant not just to labor mobilization but to social movement participation and persistence generally**. Most movements, in fact, attempt to appeal to distinct social groups. In order to persist, they must also successfully negotiate internal status divisions. Social Movement Participation and Striking Workers 1321 Equally, if not more important, is our finding that **strike participation is shaped by more than individual status, income, and identity. Networks, too, are influential**. Results indicated that, above and beyond individual causes, class identity within networks and especially strike action among those in one’s unit have implications for individual involvement. **Both quantitative results and supplemental ethnographic material suggest that workplace networks are crucial through grievance sharing and identity formation prior to the strike, as well as through individual decision making and calculations at a pivotal point.** Here, an initial core of strikers in the unit appeared to be influential for engaging others in strike mobilization. The results also suggested, through a declining but persistent positive effect of network strike support, a possibility that there are lingering costs associated with not striking when others in one’s unit do

**Unions create the multiracial solidarity society workers need to overcome racism**

**Day**, Meagan. “Unions Are Essential for Eliminating Racism.” Jacobin, July **2020**, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2020/07/multiracial-solidarity-unions>. Meagan Day is a staff writer at Jacobin. She is the coauthor of [Bigger than Bernie: How We Go from the Sanders Campaign to Democratic Socialism](https://www.versobooks.com/books/3167-bigger-than-bernie). //ear

**There are a number of different mechanisms by which unions might decrease racism**, and Frymer and Grumbach present cases for several in their paper, **ranging from structural incentives for union leadership to promote racial equality to the labor movement’s institutional ties to the comparatively less racist Democratic Party**. **But I’ll stress one in particular: unions provide opportunities for people of different racial backgrounds and identities to not merely work side by side — which may itself relax prejudice through sheer exposure — but to work toward a common goal together, promoting cooperation, and enhancing respect and mutuality across racial lines**. In many workplaces, that goal of building a strong union cannot be achieved without workers joining together.

**Organizations of all kinds shape their members’ political views, broadly speaking, but unions are unique among organizations, as Frymer and Grumach note, due to the fact that they represent people based on where they work**. **Work is compulsory for most people of all racial backgrounds, which means that union membership can and often does (though not as a rule) feature a degree of diversity that’s higher than in other types of community formations.** For example, a white Indiana warehouse worker may live in a mostly white neighborhood, and perhaps attend a mostly white church, but his or her employer hires people of all racial backgrounds, and therefore their union is likely to be more racially diverse.

But lots of workplaces are racially diverse. **The distinct feature of unions is that workers from disparate backgrounds are encouraged to view their interests as bound together. And in many cases, they have opportunities to make collective decisions about how they want their union to be run, and to work together to secure common victories**.

Some unions are more democratic or better at member engagement than others. Indeed this presents a strong argument for building more democratic unions, for it’s in active cooperation that people are most likely to have their inherited prejudices challenged and their worldview transformed.

**Unions give people the opportunity to routinely practice multiracial solidarity. Not only that, but they incentivize it: the more cooperative union members are, the greater unity they will have heading into a workplace struggle, and the greater the eventual reward for all. In that sense, diverse democratic unions can be schools of cross-racial cooperation, which are sorely lacking and desperately needed in our racially stratified society.**

**Unions provide better conditions for all workers.**

**Bahn et. al.** “Wage discrimination and the exploitation of workers in the U.S. labor market.” Washington Center for Equitable Growth, 15 Sep. **2020,** <https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/>. **Kate Bahn** is the director of labor market policy and economist at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth. Her areas of research include gender, race, and ethnicity in the labor market, care work, and monopsonistic labor markets. //ech

There are several policy options for restoring worker power in the United States. **First, policymakers can strengthen unions, expand their ability to organize workers, and make it easier for workers to form unions by passing pro-labor policies** such as the [Protecting the Right to Organize Act](https://equitablegrowth.org/factsheet-the-pro-act-addresses-income-inequality-by-boosting-the-organizing-power-of-u-s-workers/), which passed in the U.S. House of Representatives but stalled in the U.S. Senate earlier this year.[42](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-42) **In boosting worker bargaining power and collective action,**[**unions limit employers’ ability to exploit workers**](https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/how-does-market-power-affect-wages-monopsony-and-collective-action-in-an-institutional-context/)**.**[**43**](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-43)**Unions are proven institutions through which workers can negotiate with employers for higher pay and better, safer working conditions. The right to strike and act** collectively remains incredibly **important for workers to be able to demand better pay and working conditions or protest unfair treatment.**[**Research**](https://equitablegrowth.org/what-kind-of-labor-organizations-do-u-s-workers-want/)**on the types of unions and unionization benefits that the U.S. workforce wants shows how important the ability to organize and bargain collectively is to workers.**[**44**](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-44)**Not only does it help workers themselves, but direct contact with strikes and those striking can also lead to higher overall public support for organized labor.** [One study](https://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/do-teacher-strikes-make-parents-pro-or-anti-labor-the-effects-of-labor-unrest-on-mass-attitudes/) of the 2018 teacher strikes in the United States, for instance, showed that parents who had firsthand exposure to the walk-outs were more likely to support the teachers who were striking and more likely to join a union or support unionization.[45](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-45) Only around 10 percent of private-sector workers are union members today, but [studies](https://equitablegrowth.org/what-kind-of-labor-organizations-do-u-s-workers-want/) now show that many more nonunionized workers want to belong to one.[46](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-46) **Even those workers who are not union members benefit from strong unionization thanks to**[**spillover effects**](http://www.fas.nus.edu.sg/ecs/events/seminar/seminar-papers/23%20April%202019.pdf)**,**[**47**](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-47)**wherein unions set job-quality standards that nonunion firms must meet in order to remain attractive and compete for workers.** Earlier this year, Harvard University’s Labor and Worklife Program announced a set of policies designed to address economic and political inequality in the United States through a new legal framework that would rebalance power in the labor market.[48](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-48) The “[clean slate for worker power](https://equitablegrowth.org/clean-slate-for-worker-power-promotes-a-fair-and-inclusive-u-s-economy/)” agenda proposals include new activities for organized labor to participate in and expansions of collective bargaining coverage in graduated representation levels, as well as a path to achieve sectoral bargaining across the economy. [All of the policies proposed](https://equitablegrowth.org/factsheet-how-strong-unions-can-restore-workers-bargaining-power/) would enhance worker power and strengthen unions, ensuring that employers aren’t able to freely take advantage of their workers in order to maximize profits.[49](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-49) Likewise, repealing state-level right-to-work laws would increase unions’ power and ability to protect workers from exploitation. So, too, would repealing [the Taft-Hartley Act](https://www.nlrb.gov/about-nlrb/who-we-are/our-history/1947-taft-hartley-substantive-provisions), which allows states to pass right-to-work laws.[50](https://equitablegrowth.org/research-paper/wage-discrimination-and-the-exploitation-of-workers-in-the-u-s-labor-market/?longform=true#footnote-50)

**C2: Poverty**

**The current conditional system allows coercion and job loss to disincentivize a right to strike**

**Lafer and Loustaunau 20** Report • By Gordon Lafer and Lola Loustaunau • July 23. “Fear at Work: An inside Account of How Employers Threaten, Intimidate, and Harass Workers to Stop Them from Exercising Their Right to Collective Bargaining.” Economic Policy Institute, July 2020, www.epi.org/publication/fear-at-work-how-employers-scare-workers-out-of-unionizing/.

Most American workers want a union in their workplace but very few have it, because the right to organize—supposedly guaranteed by federal law—has been effectively cancelled out by a combination of legal and illegal employer intimidation tactics. This report focuses on the legal tactics—heavy-handed tactics that would be illegal in any election for public office but are regularly deployed by employers under the broken National Labor Relations Board’s union election system. Under this system, employees in workplace elections have no right to free speech or a free press, are threatened with losing their jobs if they vote to establish a union, and can be forced to hear one-sided propaganda with no right to ask questions or hear from opposing viewpoints. Employers—including many respectable, name-brand companies—collectively spend $340 million per year on “union avoidance” consultants who teach them how to exploit these weakness of federal labor law to effectively scare workers out of exercising their legal right to collective bargaining.Inside accounts of unionization drives at a tire manufacturing plant in Georgia and at a pay TV services company in Texas illustrate what those campaigns look like in real life. Below are some of the common employer tactics that often turn overwhelming support for unions at the outset of a campaign into a “no” vote just weeks later. All of these are legal under current law: Forcing employees to attend daily anti-union meetings where pro-union workers have no right to present [and]alternative views and can be fired on the spot if they ask a question.Plastering the workplace with anti-union posters, banners, and looping video ads—and denying pro-union employees access to any of these media. Instructing managers to tell employees that there’s a good chance they will lose their jobs if they vote to unionize. Having supervisors hold multiple one-on-one talks with each of their employees, stressing why it would be bad for them to vote in a union. Having managers tell employees that pro-union workers are “the enemy within.” Telling supervisors to [and]grill[ing] subordinates about their views on unionization, effectively destroying the principle of a secret ballot. At the heart of management’s campaign was the threat that workers would lose their jobs if they voted to unionize. Under the NLRA, it is legal for employers to “predict” that they will shut down if workers organize, but illegal to “threaten” closure. Insofar as they scare workers out of organizing, there is no significant difference between these, and employers often issue a combination of illegal threats and technically legal predictions. In Kumho’s case, an administrative law judge of the NLRB ultimately determined that 12 different managers (including the company’s CEO) issued illegal [and] threat[en] to close the plant or lay off employees.[48](https://www.epi.org/publication/fear-at-work-how-employers-scare-workers-out-of-unionizing/#_note48)

**The RTS is the fundamental right for union negotiation**

**Myall, James.** “Right to Strike Would Level the Playing Field for Public Workers, with Benefits for All of Us.” Maine Center for Economic Policy, 17 Apr. **2019,** https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/.[James Myall](https://www.mecep.org/author/james-myall/) is a Policy analyst for [@MECEP1](https://twitter.com/MECEP1) . Member, Maine Permanent Commission on Racial, Indigenous & Tribal Pops. British. Recovering historian. //ear

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]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/%22%20/l%20%22_edn2) 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. Notes [[i]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/%22%20/l%20%22_ednref1) MECEP analysis of US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Outgoing Rotation Group data, 1998-2017 via the Integrated Public Use Microdata System. [[ii]](https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/%22%20/l%20%22_ednref2) Jeffrey Keefe, “Laws Enabling Public-Sector Collective Bargaining Have Not Led to Excessive Public-Sector Pay,” Economic Policy Institute, Oct 16, 2015. Web. Available at <https://www.epi.org/publication/laws-enabling-public-sector-collective-bargaining-have-not-led-to-excessive-public-sector-pay/>

**Unions increase wages & solve poverty, and these impacts extends to even non-union workers**

David **Brady et al**, Berlin Social Research Centerbduke University & Wzb Berlin Social Research Center, 8-30-**2013**, "When Unionization Disappears: State-Level Unionization and Working Poverty in the United States," SAGE Journals, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859>  Professor and Director of [Blum Initiative on Global and Regional Poverty, School of Public Policy, University of California, Riverside](https://sociology.ucr.edu/faculty/david-brady/)//ear

Despite these reasons for skepticism, **we propose that state-level unionization reduces working poverty. This expectation is theoretically motivated by three literatures:** (1) comparative institutions; (2) unionization and earnings; and (3) U.S. states as polities. First, **the comparative institutions literature demonstrates that institutions and power relations between collective actors fundamentally shape inequalities** ([Brady and Leicht 2008](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). **Institutions and power relations organize the distribution of resources**, regulate risks, allocate opportunities, and socialize normative expectations ([Brady 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Tilly 1998](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Institutions reduce the likelihood of poverty-inducing events and mitigate the consequences when such events occur ([DiPrete 2002](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Power resources theory, which animates much of the comparative institutions literature ([Brady 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Hicks 1999](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Korpi 1983](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Moller et al. 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Volscho and Kelly 2012](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), contends that class-based collective political actors shape the distribution of economic resources ([Brady, Fullerton, and Cross 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). To make the distribution more egalitarian, the working class and poor must bond together, form organizations, and politically mobilize in elections and workplaces. Although power resources theory is traditionally used to explain welfare states, it offers a more general model of income distribution ([Brady et al. 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Korpi 1983](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Accordingly, **the level of unionization in a state is an important labor market institution, indicating the power resources of labor relative to business and other collective actors.** Consistent with power resources theory, the comparative institutions literature shows that cross-national variation in earnings inequality can be explained by labor market institutions like corporatism and unionization ([Blau and Kahn 2002](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Koeniger, Leonardi, and Nunziata 2007](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Kristal 2010](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Scholars have also demonstrated that labor market institutions can explain cross-national differences in low-wage work ([Doellgast, Holtgrewe, and Deery 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Gautie and Schmitt 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), poverty ([Brady 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Moller et al. 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Plasman and Rycx 2001](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), and working poverty specifically ([Brady et al. 2010](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Lohmann 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Zuberi 2006](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Despite these contributions, the comparative literature’s insights have rarely been applied to the study of U.S. poverty. Second, **an extensive economic and sociological literature shows that unions raise wages** ([Freeman and Medoff 1984](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Kalleberg, Wallace, and Althauser 1981](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). [Cornfield and Fletcher (2001)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859) **estimate union members receive a 20 percent wage premium over similar non-union workers. Because wages are a large share of low-income households’ economic resources, such wage advantages could lift many households out of poverty.** The union wage premium even applies to low-wage workers with less skill ([Eren 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)) or less than a high school education ([Maxwell 2007](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). **Although the U.S. poverty literature neglects unionization, scholars of low-wage work have shown powerful effects of unions** ([Gautie and Schmitt 2009](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Newman 1999](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Zuberi 2006](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). **Benefits of unionization have been documented for low-wage workers in hospitals** ([Applebaum et al. 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), **hotels** ([Bernhardt, Dresser, and Hatton 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), **call centers** ([Batt, Hunter, and Wilk 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)), **and casinos** ([Waddoups 2001](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)) **and for temporary workers** in automotive supplier firms, hospitals, and public schools ([Erickcek, Houseman, and Kalleberg 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). **These studies demonstrate how unions pressure management for higher wages, restrict the use of contingent workers whose presence would reduce wages, and regulate working conditions. Although there are benefits to being a union member, the vast majority of workers near the poverty line are unlikely to be unionized**. For state-level unionization to reduce working poverty, it must have a contextual effect that spills over to non-union, low-wage workers.[4](about:blank) Indeed, **the literature has found such spillover effects of unionization for non-union workers**. For instance, [Zuberi (2006)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859) **demonstrates how higher unionization in Vancouver versus Seattle contributes to a significantly better environment for even non-union service workers.** **The classic explanation—contrary to the aforementioned crowding effects—is that unionization poses a threat to non-unionized firms**. **To discourage unionization, proximate firms raise wages preemptively** ([Freeman and Medoff 1984](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Leicht 1989](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). [Leicht, Wallace, and Grant (1993)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859) demonstrate that the presence of unionization in interdependent industries raises the earnings of the non-union working class. Partly because unions establish contracts that cover non-union workers, unionization also benefits non-union workers, especially in the presence of high union density ([Bernhardt et al. 2003](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859); [Neumark and Wachter 1995](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859)). Non-union firms in states with higher unionization may be forced to pay more, or else risk losing their workers to better paid union-firms. Furthermore, unions influence the moral economy by cultivating norms of equity and advocating for the expectation of higher pay for all workers. [Western and Rosenfeld (2011)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859) argue that unions encourage labor market norms of equity (1) culturally, by disseminating egalitarian discourses; (2) politically, by influencing policy; and (3) institutionally, through rules governing labor markets. Accounting for the effect of unions on non-union wages, [Western and Rosenfeld (2011)](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0003122413501859) conclude that the decline of unionization in the United States explains one-fifth to one-third of the growth in earnings inequality since 1973. If these effects are not solely due to constraining the top of the earnings distribution, the decline of unionization has likely increased working poverty.