## Framework

#### I affirm resolved: “A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.” Next, an observation: there is a distinction between a right to organize strikes and a right to violence. As it is unfair to characterize a knife as inherently violent since it might be used for bad things, the same goes for strikes, which are defined as a protest. The affirmative only endorses the right of workers to gather, and any violent or negative consequences are prohibited. A second observation: having a right to do something does not automatically entail exercising it. People who are currently satisfied with their working conditions will remain as so, while those who need to will use the right to strike.

#### Framework:

#### My value is justice as fairness. Life is not fair since some people are born into situations with advantages or disadvantages that they did nothing to deserve. The job of a just government is to offset said unfair conditions in order to provide everyone with a fair opportunity. Everyone must have equal access to the basic needs of life: thus, fairness is a precondition for other values.

#### Political conceptions for equality are key to determine morality for equal understanding.

**Professor in Humanities, Samuel Freeman, stated in 2007** Samuel Freeman [Avalon Professor in the Humanities at The University of Pennsylvania. Justice and the Social Contract: Essays on Rawlsian Political Philosophy. Oxford University Press. New York, NY. 2007. 37]

We have considered how the social contract plays a role within Rawls's conception of justice, from the point of view of free and equal persons and from the perspective of the parties in the original position. Let us now consider a second way in which agreement plays a role, implicit in a third perspective in Rawls's view, that of ourselves as members of a democratic society.45Rawls identifies the aim of political philosophy as [is] a practical one: to define a conception of justice that can [provide a shared public basis for the justification of political and social institutions.]46 Its task is to locate a basis for agreement in a culture that all can affirm and accept and that can serve as a basis for public reasoning and stable social cooperation. The practical aim of a political conception is to be contrasted with what we might call the theoretical aim of a moral conception, which is truth. [Justice as fairness . . . presents itself not as a conception of justice that is true, but one that can serve as a basis of informed and willing political agreement between citizens] (JF, 230). This does not mean that Rawls is not interested in objectivity or truth (clearly Rawls thinks that the general facts assumed by his theory and the parties are true [TJ, 547/481 rev.]). Rather, there is a difference between the primary objects of a practical versus a theoretical inquiry. Whether Rawls's principles are or can be true, in the sense that they satisfy a metaphysical account of truth, is a separate issue which Rawls does not address. He thinks it important to [avoid the problem of truth and the controversy between realism and subjectivism] if justice as fairness is to achieve its practical aim in a democracy (JF, 230). This point is essential to Rawls's version of liberalism, as well as to understanding the sense in which his is a social contract view. The practical aim of a political conception does not by itself seem to imply any form of a social contract. For, we might imagine a society in which appeals to religious authority, or to self-evident truths about good reasons, provided the basis for public justification and agreement (cf. CP, 343). Rawls's point is that such appeals cannot work in a democracy. For, given that democratic citizens have different and competing philosophical conceptions of the nature and bases of truth, objectivity, and so on, a basis for public reasoning and agreement cannot be achieved by a conception of justice that relies on such premises. Here the idea of social agreement comes in; such an idea is implicit in what I will call the practical that Rawls sees as is appropriate for a democratic society.

#### My criterion is benefiting those who are least well-off. A government is most just when it ensures that every person has a fair chance, regardless of the natural lottery. The people who need that fair chance the most are those who are in the working class because they have been born into it. This is necessary for all other values – before we decide the greatest good or societal well being or morality, we have to determine how to define what is the most moral or beneficial.

## Contention 1- Income Inequality

**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)

#### Restoring union ability to strike solves for inequality

Shierholz 20 January 27, 2020 at 3:18 pm by [Heidi Shierholz](https://www.epi.org/people/heidi-shierholz/) (Ph.D., Economics, University of Michigan M.A., Economics, University of Michigan M.S., Statistics, Iowa State University B.A., Mathematics, Grinnell College, Senior Economist and Director of Policy ) Weakened labor movement leads to rising economic inequality https://www.epi.org/blog/weakened-labor-movement-leads-to-rising-economic-inequality///(\*ak)

The basic facts about inequality in the United States—that for most of the last 40 years, pay has stagnated for all but the highest paid workers and inequality has risen dramatically—are widely understood. What is less well-known is the role the decline of unionization has played in those trends. The share of workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement dropped from [27 percent to 11.6 percent between 1979 and 2019](https://www.epi.org/data/#?subject=unioncov), meaning the union coverage rate is now less than half where it was 40 years ago. Research shows that this de-unionization accounts for a sizable share of the growth in inequality over that period—[around 13–20 percent for women and 33–37 percent for men](https://www.epi.org/publication/labor-day-2019-collective-bargaining/). Applying these shares to annual earnings data reveals that working people are now losing on the order of $200 billion per year as a result of the erosion of union coverage over the last four decades—with that money being redistributed upward, to the rich. The good news is that restoring union coverage—and strengthening workers’ abilities to join together to improve their wages and working conditions in other ways—is therefore likely to put at least $200 billion per year into the pockets of working people. These changes could happen through organizing and policy reform. Policymakers have introduced legislation, the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, that would significantly reform current labor law. Building on the reforms in the PRO Act, the [Clean Slate for Worker Power Project](https://lwp.law.harvard.edu/clean-slate-project) proposes further transformation of labor law, with innovative ideas to create balance in our economy. How is it that de-unionization has played such a large role in wage stagnation for working people and the rise of inequality? When workers are able to join together, form a union and collectively bargain, their pay goes up. On average, a worker covered by a union contract earns [13.2 percent](https://www.epi.org/publication/how-todays-unions-help-working-people-giving-workers-the-power-to-improve-their-jobs-and-unrig-the-economy/) more than a peer with similar education, occupation and experience in a non-unionized workplace in the same sector. Furthermore, the benefits of collective bargaining extend well beyond union workers. Where unions are strong, they essentially set broader standards that non-union employers must match in order to attract and retain the workers they need and to avoid facing an organizing drive. The combination of the direct effect of unions on their members and this “spillover” effect to non-union workers means unions are crucial in fostering a vibrant middle class—and has also meant that as unionization has eroded, pay for working people has stagnated and inequality has skyrocketed. Unions also help shrink racial wage gaps. For example, black workers are more likely than white workers to be represented by a union, and black workers who are in unions get a larger boost to wages from being in a union than white workers do. This means that the decline of unionization has played a significant role in the [expansion of the black–white wage gap](https://www.epi.org/publication/black-white-wage-gaps-expand-with-rising-wage-inequality/#epi-toc-16). But isn’t the erosion of unionization because workers don’t want unions anymore? No—survey data show that in fact, a [higher](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0019793918806250) share of non-union workers say they would vote for a union in their workplace today than did 40 years ago. Isn’t the erosion of unionization due to the shifts in employment from manufacturing to service-producing industries? No again—changing industry composition [explains only a small share](https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-shift-in-private-sector-union-participation-explanations-and-effects/) of the erosion of union coverage. What has caused declining unionization? One key factor is fierce corporate opposition that has smothered workers’ freedom to form unions. Aggressive anti-union campaigns—once confined to the most anti-union employers—have become widespread. For example, it is now standard, when workers seek to organize, for their employers to hire union avoidance consultants to coordinate fierce anti-union campaigns. We estimate that employers spend nearly [$340 million per year](https://www.epi.org/publication/unlawful-employer-opposition-to-union-election-campaigns/) hiring union avoidance advisers to help them prevent employees from organizing. And though the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) makes it illegal for employers to intimidate, coerce or fire workers in retaliation for participating in union-organizing campaigns, the penalties are grossly insufficient to provide a meaningful disincentive for such behavior. This means employers often engage in illegal activities, such as threatening to close the worksite, cutting union activists’ hours or pay, or reporting workers to immigration enforcement authorities if employees unionize. In [at least 1 in 5](https://www.epi.org/publication/unlawful-employer-opposition-to-union-election-campaigns/) union elections, employers are charged with illegally firing workers involved in organizing. In the face of these attacks on union organizing, policymakers have egregiously failed to update labor laws to balance the system. Fundamental reform is necessary to build worker power and guarantee all workers the right to come together and have a real voice in their workplace. Restoring the right to representation on the job will likely put at least $200 billion in the pockets of working families each year, reducing income inequality and racial wage gaps, building a vibrant middle class and creating an economy that works for all, not just the privileged few.

#### Strikes help workers to increase wages and improve working conditions – negotiations with employers are unbalanced - without the right to strike workers would be abused and subject to unsafe working conditions.

Bahn, 2019 - Director of Labor Market Policy at the Washington Center for Equitable Growth [Kate, August 29 “The once and future role of strikes in ensuring U.S. worker power” <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 right to strike is essential to all unions and collective action – it is critical to persuade employers.

Leyton-García, 2017 - Professor of Labor Law at Pontificia Universidad, Chile [Jorge Andrés “The Right To Strike As A Fundamental Human Right: Recognition And Limitations In International Law” Revista Chilena de Derecho, vol. 44, núm. 3, 2017, pp. 781-804 <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=177054481008>]

“In the light of Demir and Baykara, cited above, the right of association of workers includes the following essential elements: the right to form and join a trade union, the prohibition of closed-shop agreements, the right to bargain collectively with the employer and the right for a trade union to seek to persuade the employer to hear what it has to say on behalf of its members. In a democratic society, the ultimate practical “means to persuade the employer to hear” the demands of the workers is obviously strike action. If collective action represents the core of the workers’ freedom of association, strike action is the core of the core. Indeed, striking predated both unions and collective bargaining. Thus, the taking of strike action should be accorded the status of an essential element of the Article 11 guarantee” 32.

#### A right to strike is the foundational aspect of collective workforce power and unionized negotiation. Myall 19

James Myall, MECEP’s lead on the inclusive economy, including research on labor issues, gender and racial equity, and health care policy. James conducts research and impact analyses, writes educational materials, and collaborates with partners. He is skilled in data collection, research, and statistical and policy analysis. He studied public policy and management at the University of Southern Maine and holds a master’s degree in ancient history and archaeology from the University of St. Andrews in Scotland. 4-17-2019, "Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us," MECEP, https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/, 10-26-2021//Aanya

The right to strike would enable fairer negotiations between public workers and the government. All of us have reason to support that outcome. Research shows that union negotiations set the bar for working conditions with other employers. And as the largest employer in Maine, the state’s treatment of its workers has a big impact on working conditions in the private sector. Unions support a fairer economy. Periods of high union membership are associated with lower levels of income inequality, both nationally and in Maine. Strong unions, including public-sector unions, have a critical role to play in rebuilding a strong middle class. Source: MECEP analysis of U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, National Health Expenditure Survey data (spending by state of residence, 1991-2014). Adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, and for population using the U.S. Census Bureau’s population estimates. 2018 spending estimate from Maine Health Data Organization. Unions help combat inequities within work places. Women and people of color in unions face less wage discrimination than those in nonunion workplaces. On average, wages for nonunionized white women in Maine are 18 percent less than of those of white men. Among unionized workers, that inequality shrinks to just 9 percent. Similarly, women of color earn 26 percent less than men in nonunionized jobs; for unionized women of color, the wage gap shrinks to 17 percent.[i] All of us have a stake in the success of collective bargaining. But a union without the right to strike loses much of its negotiating power. The right to withdraw your labor is the foundation of collective worker action. When state employees or teachers are sitting across the negotiating table from their employers, how much leverage do they really have when they can be made to work without a contract? It’s like negotiating the price of a car when the salesman knows you’re going to have to buy it — whatever the final price is. Research confirms that public-sector unions are less effective without the right to strike. Public employees with a right to strike earn between 2 percent and 5 percent more than those without it.[ii] While that’s a meaningful increase for those workers, it also should assuage any fears that a right to strike would lead to excessive pay increases or employees abusing their new right. LD 900, “An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Employees Under the Maine Labor Laws,” ensures that Maine’s public-sector workers will have the same collective bargaining rights as other employees in Maine. The bill would strengthen the ability of Maine’s public-sector workers to negotiate, resulting in higher wagers, a more level playing field, and a fairer economy for all of us.

#### Subpoint 2- Federal law creates conditions on the right to strike - it prohibits government workers from striking, which allows involuntary servitude

Berman, 2019 - Staff writer for The Atlantic**.** [Russel “Why Federal Workers still have to show up even if their not being paid”, JANUARY 9, 2019,https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/01/shutdown-federal-workers-cant-strike/579793/]]

Faced with a potentially indefinite shutdown, the unions have turned to the courts for relief. The American Federation of Government Employees has filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration alleging that by requiring employees to work without pay, the government is in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a 1938 law that mandates a minimum wage and overtime pay both to public- and private-sector workers. Another federal labor group, the National Treasury Employees Union, has filed a similar suit.The unions are also holding rallies, highlighting the impact of the shutdown on federal workers who live paycheck to paycheck, and publicly urging Trump and congressional leaders to come to an agreement that reopens the government. That, however, is about as far as they’ll go to protest the shutdown.Despite taking the government to court, neither union is encouraging its members to take part in any kind of work stoppage. “We encourage everyone who is being told to come to work to go to work,” Simon told me. “We are never going to advocate for something that’s illegal.” As for reports of higher levels of sick calls by TSA agents, Simon said: “We aren’t coordinating that. We aren’t condoning that, and we don’t even really think it’s happening. We think it’s been greatly exaggerated in the press.” Federal employees generally haven’t tested the prohibition on strikes since President Ronald Reagan famously fired more than 11,000 air-traffic controllers who refused his order to return to work during contract talks in 1981. The controllers walked out in demand of higher pay and a shorter workweek. Federal workers have never staged a mass walkout to protest the lack of pay during a shutdown. But even in that circumstance, the anti-strike law would probably hold up, said Zachary Henige, an attorney representing two federal employees in their lawsuit agains the government over the current shutdown.The law prohibits public employees from striking, forcing them into what one union leader called “involuntary servitude” during the government shutdown. Eric Young is the president of the union that represents the approximately 30,000 employees of the Federal Bureau of Prisons who are working during the government shutdown. Young’s members, scattered at 122 facilities located in largely rural areas across the country, aren’t being paid and don’t know when their next paycheck will come. Like the leaders of virtually every federal-employee union during the past three weeks, he has condemned the shutdown and its toll on innocent workers as “unconscionable.” “My personal opinion,” Young told me over the phone from his office in Arkansas, “is that it constitutes involuntary servitude.” “We can’t call or advocate for a strike,” Young said. Since the enactment of the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, federal employees have been legally prohibited from striking. That law was intended to prevent public-sector workers from leveraging a work stoppage that could cripple the U.S. government or major industries in negotiations for better pay, working conditions, and benefits. But it likely did not envision a scenario where the government would require its employees to work without paying them, as is the case now.

#### Prison labor is not justified and leads to recidivism and people accepting bad labor conditions outside of prison.

**Mantouvalou 21**, Virginia. “Human Rights for Working Prisoners.” UK Labour Law, 8 Sept. 2021, https://uklabourlawblog.com/2021/09/08/human-rights-for-working-prisoners-by-virginia-mantouvalou/. Virginia Mantouvalou is Professor of Human Rights and Labour Law at UCL, Faculty of Laws. LHS//EH

Are the exclusions justified? Some may think that these exclusions of working prisoners from protective laws are justified because working prisoners should contribute to the cost of the running of the facilities. Yet upon closer inspection, we see that **the work that prisoners do** often consists in much more than maintenance of the facilities, that it can **involve[s] long** working **hours**, that the quality of the work **[and] does not support** their **reintegration[.]** and that private firms make profit from this situation (see the blog post by Pandeli). The fact that **the work of prisoners is linked to structures of exploitation** must make us question this supposed justification. To the contrary, what we see is that the **rules increase** and perpetuate **existing structural unfairness:** people who may **[those] already** be **disadvantaged because of** background conditions of **poverty are excluded from the protection of labour law.** They are in this way made vulnerable to exploitation by profit-making organisations that are involved in the running of the prisons or the running of prison workshops where prisoners are employed. There is another crucial issue that must be highlighted. **These structures** of exploitation **do not only affect workers** employed **while in prison. They are connected to precarious work after they leave the criminal justice system.** It has been observed by [Erin Hatton](https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520305342/labor-and-punishment) that those who have worked in prison **[they] ‘come to expect** – and sometimes embrace – **low-wage precarious work outside prison’.** In addition, they also face serious obstacles when attempting to find better work because of their criminal record (see [this article](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/law-and-social-inquiry/article/abs/working-around-the-law-navigating-legal-barriers-to-employment-during-reentry/6D037D791DFB29C759BC569CC2C6B287) by Dallas Augustine). What we see is that the structure of exploitation in prison extends to structures of exploitation after prison.

#### The aff solves for the conditions of the prison system.

**HLR 19** “Striking the Right Balance: Toward a Better Understanding of Prison Strikes.” Harvard Law Review, 8 Mar. 2019, https://harvardlawreview.org/2019/03/striking-the-right-balance-toward-a-better-understanding-of-prison-strikes/. LHS//EH

From August 21, 2018, to September 9, 2018, incarcerated individuals across America orchestrated a daring and seemingly improbable coordinated protest: they went on strike. From California to North Carolina and in roughly fifteen other states, thousands of prisoners engaged in peaceful work stoppages, hunger strikes, sit-ins, and commissary boycotts. This nationwide strike emerged in part as a response to a deadly riot, kindled by poor living conditions and guard understaffing, at the Lee Correctional Institution in South Carolina in April 2018. But more broadly, the prison strikers sought to draw public attention to longstanding grievances over inhumane treatment within prisons across the country and to call for significant criminal justice reforms. The strikers, through the inmate organization Jailhouse Lawyers Speak, issued a list of ten national demands, calling for, among other things, improved prison conditions, better access to rehabilitation programs, voting rights for all current and former prisoners, and the “immediate end to the racial overcharging, over-sentencing, and parole denials of Black and brown humans.” Most critically, the strikers passionately called for the “immediate end to prison slavery”— the label that activists use to describe the exploitative labor practices within prisons of putting prisoners to work, sometimes compulsorily, for just “cents an hour or even for free.”

Although none of the strikers’ ten demands have yet been met, the 2018 nationwide prison strike was still a remarkable event in its scope and coordination, as well as its ability to generate public support and attention. An estimated 150 different organizations endorsed the strike; citizens held numerous demonstrations outside of prisons in solidarity; and a range of national media publications provided detailed coverage of the protest’s motivations, objectives, tactics, and status as potentially the “largest prison strike in U.S. history.”

Despite the 2018 prison strike’s apparent gravity, it is difficult to fully contextualize its significance because surprisingly little attention has been paid to prison strikes previously. For instance, just two years prior, in 2016, a similar nationwide prison strike was described as “[t]he largest prison strike . . . you [probably] haven’t heard about.” Show More In light of this reality, this Note peers behind prison walls to improve our understanding of prison strikes — the end goal being to open the door to a broader discussion of why and how these strikes should receive legal protection. Part I briefly documents America’s history of prison strikes, showing that the 2018 nationwide strike is the latest in a long, important tradition of prisoners using the only real means available to them are collective actions against prison administrators — to protest labor conditions and other deeply held grievances. Part II then evaluates the legal framework governing prison strikes, demonstrating that such **strikes** likely **do not receive sufficient protections** under either the Constitution or federal and state statutes **and therefore can be shut down by prison administrators without fear of judicial oversight**. Part III, informed by the rich history of prison strikes, argues that **their** potential and demonstrated **value demands, at the very least, consideration** of the merits **of protecting incarcerated individuals’ right to strike,** and it contends that **the First Amendment** framework **offers one** **potential avenue to allow prisoners to peacefully surface pressing problems in our carceral system and to collectively express their humanity and dignity.**

#### This is one example of how it could work in the US, with similar means of enforcement on a global scale solving for the incredibly inhumane conditions they face.

## Contention Two: Political Engagement

#### Strong unions are essential to empower workers politically, to ensure fairness in society.

Bivens, 2017 - the director of  research at the Economic Policy Institute [Jason, Aug 17, “How today’s unions help working people” https://www.epi.org/publication/how-todays-unions-help-working-people-giving-workers-the-power-to-improve-their-jobs-and-unrig-the-economy/]

Unions are a dynamic and ever-evolving institution of the American economy that exist to give working people a voice and leverage over their working conditions and the economic policy decisions that shape these conditions. Collective bargaining is indispensable if we want to achieve shared prosperity. But it is precisely because they are effective and necessary for shared prosperity that unions are under attack by employers who want to maintain excessive leverage over workers and by policymakers representing the interests of the top 1 percent. These attacks have succeeded in increasing the gap between the number of workers who would like to be represented by a union and the number who are represented by a union. And these threats to the freedom to join together in unions haven’t been met with a policy response sufficient to keep the playing field level between organizing workers and the employers looking to thwart them. Giving workers a real voice and leverage is essential for democracy. While unions historically have not been able to match corporate political donations dollar for dollar, working people organizing together in unions play an equalizing role because they can motivate members to give their time and effort to political causes. For example, one study found that unions are very effective at getting people to the polls—especially increasing voting among those with only a high school education

#### The right to strike must also be unconditional in order to provide the necessary bargaining power.

**Thorwaldsson [2]**, Karl-Petter. “Taking Away the Right to Strike Would Make Us All into Slaves.” Equal Times, 31 Oct. 2014, https://www.equaltimes.org/taking-away-the-right-to-strike#.YWCndhrMKUk. LHS//EHThe kafala system gives the employer complete control over their workers. Millions of migrant workers, mostly from poorer countries, are trapped in this system.They can’t change jobs unless their employer allows them to, they can’t leave the country unless their boss signs an exit visa, and trade unions and strike action are totally forbidden. This leaves the worker powerless and open to the most barbaric exploitation. Poverty wages, appalling levels of death and injury at work and abusive treatment by supervisors and managers are the daily reality for the huge numbers of workers; the men building infrastructure for the [2022 World Cup in Qatar](http://www.rerunthevote.org/), the women domestic workers, and all the other jobs that generate the fantastic wealth held by a few ruling families. Life without the right to strike, life without a union, is for them a life of desperation. That’s far from the reality for most working people in the world, although in many other places basic rights for working people are far from fully respected. There are plenty of employers that respect their employees’ right to union organisation and to withdraw their labour. Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr for example, who defended his employees’ right to take industrial action when he was mocked by [Qatar Airways](http://www.equaltimes.org/qatar-airways-taking-workplace#.VFNdCxZkzm4) boss Akhbar Al-baker during a recent pilots’ strike. From the fringes to the centre But there are others who want to [eliminate the right to strike](http://www.equaltimes.org/the-ilo-employers-row-time-for-an-industrial-relations-rethink#.VFNdJxZkzm5) as a fundamental part of the international legal framework. What used to be a radical fringe of right-wing ideologues in global employer circles has now moved front and centre. **Despite decades of recognition by the** International Labour Organization’s (**ILO**) expert international panel of judges and law scholars **that the right to strike is firm**ly entrenched **in international law, the** International Organisation of Employers **(IoE**) **is seeking to change the rules**, challenging long-standing legal principles and blocking the good functioning of the tripartite Standards Committee at the ILO’s annual conference. For most people, the inner workings of the ILO may seem far away from their daily concerns – it is hardly a topic of conversation at the kitchen table. But the IOE is not simply playing legal games. **Their intent is to** weaken the ILO, and to **roll back hard-won gains that workers have made,** bit by bit, **putting the world of work onto a road that leads to** a deeply unpleasant destination. At the end of that road is **kafala for everyone.** When people’s right to withdraw their labour is taken away, they end up as little more than slaves, entirely dependent on what their boss decides and with no means to push back.

#### Strikes increase democratic participation which reinvigorates democracy.

McElwee 15 [Sean; Research Associate at Demos; “How Unions Boost Democratic Participation,” The American Prospect; 9/16/15; https://prospect.org/labor/unions-boost-democratic-participation/]

Labor organizer Helen Marot once observed, "The labor unions are group efforts in the direction of democracy." What she meant is that more than simply vehicles for the economic interests of workers (which they certainly are), labor unions also foster civic participation for workers. And nowhere is this clearer than in voter turnout, which has suffered in recent years along with union membership. Indeed, new data from the Census Bureau and a new analysis of American National Election Studies data support the case that unions' declining influence has also deeply harmed democracy.

In 2014, voter turnout was abysmal, even for a midterm. Census data suggest that only 41.9 percent of the citizen population over 18 turned out to vote. However, as I note in my new Demos report Why Voting Matters, there are dispiriting gaps in turnout across class, race, and age. To examine how unions might affect policy, I performed a new analysis of both Census Bureau and American National Election Studies data. The data below, from the 2014 election, show the differences in voter turnout between union and non-union workers (the sample only includes individuals who were employed, and does not include self-employed workers). While only 39 percent of non-union workers voted in 2014, fully 52 percent of union workers did.

As part of ongoing research, James Feigenbaum, an economics PhD candidate at Harvard, ran a regression using American National Election Studies data suggesting that union members are about 4 percentage points more likely to vote and 3 points more likely to register (after controlling for demographic factors) and individuals living in a union household are 2.5 points more likely to vote and register. This is largely in line with the earlier estimates of Richard Freeman.

These numbers may appear modest, but in a close national election they could be enough to change the result.

Other research has found an even stronger turnout effect from unions. Daniel Stegmueller and Michael Becher find that after applying numerous demographic controls, union members are 10 points more likely to vote.

What's particularly important is that unions boost turnout among low- and middle-income individuals. In a 2006 study, political scientists Jan Leighley and Jonathan Nagler found that, "the decline in union membership since 1964 has affected the aggregate turnout of both low and middle-income individuals more than the aggregate turnout of high-income individuals." In 2014, the gap between unions and non-union workers shrunk at the highest rung of the income ladder. There was a 15-point gap among those earning less than $25,000 (40 percent turnout for union workers, and 25 percent turnout for non-union workers). Among those earning more than $100,000, the gap was far smaller (49 percent for non-union workers and 52 percent for union workers).

Individuals living in union households are also more progressive than those in non-union households. I examined 2012 ANES data and find that union households aren't largely different from non-union households on many issues regarding government spending, but they are more likely to have voted for Obama, identify as Democratic, and support a robust role for the government in reducing income inequality. When looking at union members specifically, the gaps become slightly larger.

More upscale union members are far more progressive than their non-union counterparts. Non-union households with an income above $60,000 oppose government intervention to reduce inequality by 11 points, with 32.2 percent in favor and 43.4 percent against. But richer union households support government intervention, with 42.5 percent in favor and 29.9 percent opposed. As Richard B. Freeman has pointed out, "union members are more likely to vote for a Democrat for the House or Presidency than demographically comparable nonunion voters." He similarly finds that "unionism moves members to the left of where they would be given their socioeconomic status," in line with the data I examined from 2012.

A 2013 study by Jasmine Kerrissey and Evan Schofer finds that union members are not only more likely to vote, but also more likely to belong to other associations, and to protest. They also find that these effects are strongest among people with lower levels of education, suggesting that unions may help mobilize the least politically active groups. A recent study of European countries finds union members vote more and identifies those aspects of union membership that contribute to the higher turnout.

The strongest factor is that workers who engage in democratic organizations in the workplace (via collective bargaining) are more likely to engage in democracy more broadly by, for instance, voting.

Other studies support the idea that civic participation creates a feedback loop that leads to higher voting rates. Another factor is that union members make more money, and higher income is correlated with voting behavior. Finally, union members are encouraged by peers and the union to engage in politics, which also contributes to higher levels of turnout.

It's not entirely surprising that politicians who savage unions often share a similar contempt for the right to vote. Democracy in the workplace leads to democracy more broadly throughout society. Workers with more democratic workplaces are more likely to democratically engage in in society. Further, when unions and progressives demonstrate that government can benefit them, Americans are more likely to want to participate in decision-making. For all these reasons, unions play a unique and indispensable role in the progressive project. As Larry Summers, certainly not a leftist, recently argued, "the weakness of unions leaves a broad swath of the middle class largely unrepresented in the political process."

#### Second, corruption reduction – the right to strike fights concentration of power while reducing inequality.

IER 17 [Institute of Employment Rights. The IER exists to inform the debate around trade union rights and labour law by providing information, critical analysis, and policy ideas through our network of academics, researchers and lawyers. “UN Rights Expert: Right to strike is essential to democracy”. 3-10-2017. . https://www.ier.org.uk/news/un-rights-expert-right-strike-essential-democracy/.]

The United Nations’ Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Maina Kiai, has reminded member states of the International Labour Organization (ILO) – including the UK – that they have a positive obligation to uphold the right to strike. Speaking at an ILO meeting on Monday 06 March 2017 in Geneva, Kiai argued that the right to strike is fundamental to the preservation of democracy. “The concentration of power in one sector – whether in the hands of government or business – inevitably leads to the erosion of democracy, and an increase in inequalities and marginalization with all their attendant consequences. The right to strike is a check on this concentration of power,” he explained. The right to strike has been established in international law as a corollary to the right of freedom of association for decades, and is enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights as Article 11. As a member state of the ILO and of the EU, the UK is legally obliged to uphold the right to strike, although through the Trades Union Act 2016 and the anti-trade union laws that preceded it, the government is making it harder and harder for trade unions to take industrial action. Kiai criticised such actions, saying government’s have a duty not to impede workers’ ability to take industrial action. “I deplore the various attempts made to erode the right to strike at national and multilateral levels,” the expert said, reminding delegates: “Protest action in relation to government social and economic policy, and against negative corporate practices, forms part of the basic civil liberties whose respect is essential for the meaningful exercise of trade union rights. This right enables them to engage with companies and governments on a more equal footing, and Member States have a positive obligation to protect this right, and a negative obligation not to interfere with its exercise.”

#### Protecting the right to strike is key to upholding democracy

**Kiai 17** Maina Kiai, Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, took up his functions as the first Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association in May 2011. He is appointed in his personal capacity as an independent expert by the UN Human Rights Council. UN rights expert: “Fundamental right to strike must be preserved” 9 March 2017, United Nations Human Rights Office of The High Commissioner,

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21328&LangID=E//>

**The right to strike is also an intrinsic corollary of the fundamental right of freedom of association**. It is crucial **for millions of women and men around the world to assert collectively their rights in the workplace, including the right to just and favorable conditions of work, and to work in dignity and without fear of intimidation and persecution.** Moreover, **protest action** in relation to government social and economic policy, and **against negative corporate practices, forms part of the basic civil liberties whose respect is essential for the meaningful exercise of trade union rights.** This right enables them to engage with companies and governments on a more equal footing, and **the Member States have a positive obligation to protect this right, and a negative obligation not to interfere with its exercise.** Moreover, protecting **the right to strike is not simply about States fulfilling their legal obligations. It is also about them creating democratic and equitable societies that are sustainable in the long run.** The concentration of power in one sector – **whether in the hands of government or business** – inevitably **leads to the erosion of democracy, and an increase in inequalities and marginalization with all their attendant consequences.** The right **to strike is a check on this concentration of power**. I deplore the various attempts made t**o erode the right to strike at national and multilateral levels**. In this regard, I welcome the positive role played by the ILO’s Government Group in upholding workers’ **right to strike by recognizing that ‘without protecting a right to strike, freedom of association, in particular the right to organize activities for the purpose of promoting and protecting workers’ interests, cannot be fully realized.** **Look to empirical evidence worldwide— strikes serve as midwives to democracy The right to strike** should be a no-brainer for any self-respecting candidate who claims to care about working people. It isn’t some transitory policy fix; it’s **a fundamental human right, recognized in international law. Without the right to strike, workers have no effective recourse against unhealthy conditions, inadequate wages, or employer tyranny. Before the American labor movement began its long decline, unions made the right to strike a litmus test for supporting candidates. Labor leaders held that anti-strike laws imposed “involuntary servitude” in violation of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Corporate interests ridiculed this claim, arguing that the Amendment guaranteed only the individual right to quit and go elsewhere. But workers and unions held their ground. “**The simple fact is that the right of individual workers to quit their jobs has meaning only when they may quit in concert, so that in their quitting or in their threat to quit they have a real bargaining strength,” Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) General Counsel Lee Pressman explained. “It is thus hypocritical to suggest that a prohibition on the right to strike is not in practical effect a prohibition on the right to quit individually.” Labor leaders quoted the Supreme Court’s statement that the Amendment was intended “to make labor free, by prohibiting that control by which the personal service of one man is disposed of or coerced for another’s benefit which is the essence of involuntary servitude.” Although they never convinced the Supreme Court that this principle covered the right to strike, Congress did embrace the core of their claim when it protected the right to strike in two historic statutes, the Norris-LaGuardia Act of 1932 and the Wagner National Labor Relations Act of 1935. The “individual unorganized worker,” explained Congress, “is helpless to exercise actual liberty of contract and to protect his freedom of labor.” **The recent teacher strikes underscore another, equally vital function of the strike: political democracy. It is no accident that strikers often serve as midwives of democracy. Examples include Poland in the 1970s, where shipyard strikers brought down the dictatorship, and South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, where strikers were central to the defeat of apartheid. Even in relatively democratic countries like the United States, workers often find it necessary to withhold their labor in order to offset the disproportionate power of wealthy interests and racial elites. During the 1930s, for example, it took mass strikes to overcome judicial resistance to progressive economic regulation. Today, workers confront a political system that has been warped by voter suppression, gerrymandering and the judicial protection of corporate political expenditures as “freedom of speech.” With corporate lackeys holding a majority of seats on the Supreme Court, workers may soon need strikes to clear the way for progressive legislation just as they did in the 1930s.**

#### And, innovation now is limited to what’s profitable, but recognizing a right to strike forces companies to innovate sustainably – that makes new technology even better.

Baca and Greene ‘19

[Amazon, Google, other tech employees protest in support of climate action, Marie Baca and Jay Greene, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/09/20/amazon-google-other-tech-employees-protest-support-climate-action/>, September 20 2019, Education: Stanford University, BA in Human Biology; Stanford University, MA in Communications, Graduate Program in Journalism Marie C. Baca was a breaking news technology and business reporter in San Francisco. She left The Post in December 2019, Education: Macalester College, BA in English; Columbia University, MS in Journalism Jay Greene is a reporter for The Washington Post who is focused on technology coverage in the Pacific Northwest.] [SS]

**Thousands of workers at** the nation’s largest **tech companies** were expected to **walk off their jobs** Friday **to urge** industry and world **leaders to address climate change** more aggressively, part of a larger wave of demonstrations expected to draw millions of people across the globe. The group Amazon Employees for Climate Justice said **more than 1,800 Amazon employees in 25 cities pledged to walk out. Google** Workers for Action on Climate tweeted that they **expected** about **700 workers** **to strike** as of Thursday. Similar groups that said they were representing employees **at Microsoft, Facebook, Twitter, Square and other major tech companies** tweeted that they also **expected significant numbers of employees to walk out**. Hundreds gathered Friday outside Amazon’s headquarters in downtown Seattle as part of the demonstrations**. Participants chanted**, “Hey hey, ho ho, **fossil fuels have got to go**” and held signs with messages such as “Amazon, Let’s lead. Zero Emissions By 2030.” Rebecca Sheppard, 28, works in Amazon’s air, science and tech group to make the online retail giant’s planes more efficient. She said she thought about quitting last year over her concerns about Amazon’s massive carbon footprint, but colleagues discouraged her, saying she could effect change by sticking around. “We’ve just got to double down,” she said about employee efforts to produce change. (Amazon founder and chief executive Jeff Bezos owns The Washington Post.) ‘I hope the politicians hear us’: Millions of youth around the world strike for action **The strike is being held in advance of a Monday climate summit at the U**nited **N**ations. U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres has insisted that instead of bringing “fancy speeches” with them to the meeting, the countries must offer concrete commitments such as reaching net zero emissions by 2050 or eliminating the construction of coal-fired power plants. Strike organizers expected more than 1,000 events to take place in the United States alone. **The tech workers joined millions of youths from more than 150 countries** around the world who skipped school Friday in solidarity with the movement. Among them was 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who has given a speech before the United Nations, met with political and business leaders, and has been nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for her work. **Facebook released a statement** Friday **expressing its support for employees who chose to walk out** and said that **the company is “building sustainability into our operations** **as well as engaging the global community** on this important issue with our products.” Microsoft declined to comment. Google, Twitter and Square were not immediately available to comment. At Amazon, the walkout came a day after **Bezos announced a “Climate Pledge” that would require signatories to meet the goals of the Paris climate agreement a decade early. The pledge also requires regular measuring and reporting of emissions, as well as obtaining net zero carbon across businesses by 2040,** among other stipulations. U.S. takes a low profile as nations gather in New York to debate steps to combat climate change Bezos said **Amazon would be the first company to sign the pledge**. Critics, who have long claimed Amazon does little to offset the emissions it produces, say the pact lacks transparency and standardized rules for what is measured and reported. Amazon declined to comment on the walkout. In Seattle, workers who walked out held signs that opposed deals with gas and oil companies. The crowd booed when a speaker noted that Amazon funds climate-denying lobbyists. There was also a speaker from Google. **Sarah Read, a** user experience **researcher** with Prime Video, said Thursday’s announcement shows employees are having an impact. She said she **believes the Climate Pact is related to an employee-sponsored shareholder resolution that would have required the company create a plan to address climate change,** a resolution that failed in spring. Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos announces new ‘Climate Pledge’ ahead of employee protests “**It’s a direct response to Amazon employees standing up, speaking out** and saying this is important to them,” Read said.

#### For these reasons, I encourage an affirmative ballot, and stand open for cross examination.