# Trad Aff

## F/W

I affirm Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### The word ought in the resolution implies morality, thus my value is morality

#### Moral uncertainty calls for utilitarianism as a sustainable moral value.

Nick Bostrom, Faculty of Philosophy at Oxford, writes in 2012:

Nick Bostrom, Faculty of Philosophy and Oxford Martin School, University of Oxford, 2012, "Existential Risk Prevention as a Global Priority," No Publication, <https://www.existential-risk.org/concept.html> //DebateDrills TJ

These reflections on **moral uncertainty suggest** an alternative, complementary way of looking at existential risk; they also suggest **a new way of thinking about the ideal of sustainability.** Let me elaborate. Our present understanding of axiology might well be confused. **We may not now know** — at least not in concrete detail — what outcomes would count as a big win for humanity; we might not even yet be able to imagine **the best ends of our journey.** If we are indeed profoundly uncertain about our ultimate aims, then we should recognize that **there is a great option value in preserving** — and ideally improving — **our ability to recognize value and to steer the future accordingly.** **Ensuring** that there will be **a future version of humanity with great powers and a propensity to use them wisely** **is** plausibly **the best way available to us to increase the probability that the future will contain a lot of value.** To do this, we must prevent any existential catastrophe. We thus want to reach a state in which we have (a) far greater intelligence, knowledge, and sounder judgment than we currently do; (b) far greater ability to solve global-coordination problems; (c) far greater technological capabilities and physical resources; and such that (d) our values and preferences are not corrupted in the process of getting there (but rather, if possible, improved). Factors b and c expand the option set available to humanity. Factor a increases humanity's ability to predict the outcomes of the available options and understand what each outcome would entail in terms of the realization of human values. Factor d, finally, makes humanity more likely to want to

## Squo

#### Currently various states have restrictions on the right to strike. For example, **Eleven states allow strike-strict conditions**

Michael Hiltzik 2013 (Michael Hiltzik, American columnist and reporter who has written extensively for the Los Angeles Times,) Why public employees should have the right to strike 10-24-2013 Los Angeles Times https://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-xpm-2013-oct-24-la-fi-mh-strike-20131024-story.html //DebateDrills AP

It would take a finely tuned instrument to measure the speed with which a strike by public employees is followed by politicians calling for a ban on this fundamental right of organized labor. Sure enough, the ink wasn’t dry on the settlement ending the recent strike by workers for the Bay Area Rapid Transit system when a candidate for the State Assembly [spoke up](https://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-cap-glazer-20131024,0,6114109.column#axzz2ieiFIBxN).

He’s Steve Glazer, a Democrat running for a seat in the East Bay. “Transit is an essential public service, just like police and fire,” he says. He argues that since California bans strikes by police and firefighters, transit strikes should be banned too.

That’s baloney. Glazer should just admit that he’s pandering to the voters--he’s been haunting BART stations to collect signatures for a petition to ban transit strikes--and stop trying to dress up his position as a matter of principle.

It’s worth taking a quick look at the history of public employee strikes, and how they compare to strikes in the private sector.

Only 11 states allow any public employees to strike, and most of those impose limits. The most common restriction is a ban on strikes by police and firefighters, for the perfectly legitimate reason that those walkouts pose an immediate threat to public safety.

But is that true of strikes by teachers, transit workers, DMV clerks, park rangers, or almost any other category of public worker? Their walkouts pose an economic threat, which is very different. In fact, economic threats are the very essence of a strike. After all, if labor walkouts didn’t impose hardship on the other side or on third parties like customers, who can themselves exert pressure for a settlement, there’d be no point to striking at all.

The reason that public employee strikes are outlawed in all but 11 states has nothing to do with a threat to public safety. It’s that governments are the only employers that actually have the ability to outlaw them. There isn’t an employer in the world who, given the authority, wouldn’t do the same (and cook up a threadbare rationale for how strikes in this industry would compromise public safety). Supermarket owners? Airlines? UPS? They’d all love to make strikes by their workers illegal. They just don’t have the power.

That said, public employee strikes even in those 11 states are rare. As Melissa Maynard observed in the Pew Charitable Trust’s publication Stateline, last year’s Chicago teachers strike, the most high-profile public employee walkout in recent years, was [the first teachers strike in that city in 25 years](https://www.pewstates.org/projects/stateline/headlines/public-strikes-explained-why-there-arent-more-of-them-85899419275) and the first in a major city since a Detroit teachers strike in 2006.

The reason for the scarcity of public worker strikes has a lot to do with the dynamics of strikes in general. Employers and employees in any job action are making a calculation based on comparative hardship. Both sides sustain economic losses--the workers go without paychecks and risk losing their jobs, the employers lose income and risk losing customers, sometimes permanently. The goal is to survive the short-term economic loss while imposing greater costs on the other side, until one side or the other cries uncle.

And both sides try to enlist the sympathy and support of customers. Teamsters won a huge victory over UPS in a 15-day walkout in 1997, for example, because customers appreciated the efficiency of their UPS drivers and management looked cheap and greedy.

That’s harder for public employees to achieve, in part because their customers, the taxpayers, also see themselves as their employers. And employers always hate strikes.

But it’s not impossible. Teachers and public hospital nurses tend to have the greatest success, because often they can make the case that the services they provide are compromised by skinflint and inefficient management. Ask Arnold Schwarzenegger how his campaign against nurses turned out in 2006, when [he tried to cut nurse staffing ratios](https://www.labornotes.org/2006/02/california-nurses-lead-fight-against-arnold-schwarzeneggers-anti-union-ballot-measures) in state hospitals. On the other hand, BART drivers didn’t seem to have the public foursquare on their side in the recent job action. (That’s not even counting the contempt shown the BART drivers by some [overprivileged high-tech poobahs](https://www.latimes.com/business/hiltzik/la-fi-mh-bart-strike-20131021,0,1746516.story#axzz2ieiFIBxN)).

But there’s no basis for the claim that public employee strikes, outside police and fire services, are uniquely dangerous or injurious to the community. Candidate Glazer complains that the BART strike forced commuters to find other means of getting to work or kept them home, hobbling the local economy. Yes, that’s right. The same thing would have happened if the transit system were privately run, as it is in some places.

And strikes in any number of other private sector industries also hobble the local economy and impose hardships on some people. Milk strikes. Truck driver strikes. Telephone lineman strikes. Port strikes. Fast food worker strikes. The point in every case is not to minimize or moderate the impact, but try to stick the other side with the blame. And in that, public employees deserve no less the right than the rest of us to give it a shot.

#### This needs to change

## C1 Income Inequality

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## C2 Economy

#### **Many jobs across America do not pay enough for people to survive—**

#### **For example,** Bryan Mims, a general assignment reporter for WRAL News writes in 2021 that:

Bryan Mims, 21, (Bryan Mims, general assignment reporter for WRAL News' Fayetteville bureau) More workers are leaving poor working conditions for better jobs, remote work :: WRAL.com, 10-13-2021, WRAL https://www.wral.com/coronavirus/more-workers-are-leaving-poor-working-conditions-for-better-jobs-remote-work/19924431/ //DebateDrills AP

In the current job market, workers are in the driver’s seat. That means they are able to be more picky about what jobs they want and demand better working conditions.

The latest numbers from the U.S. Labor Department show that 4.3 million Americans quit their jobs in the month of August. Most of the people who quit were working in the hotel, dining or wholesale trade industries.

After Evan Bolden quit his job at a fast-food restaurant in Harnett County, he quickly found another.

"I couldn't take it, having to pull double after double after double," Bolden said. "It was atrocious."

Bolden said that his workplace was made worse due to how little staff there were to go around. On top of that, the average pay for someone working in the fast food industry in North Carolina is $7 an hour, or only $14,578 a year.

The average price for rent in Raleigh costs around $1,500 each month[, according to ApartmentList.com](https://www.apartmentlist.com/renter-life/average-rent-in-raleigh), which means minimum wage is not enough to pay for the cost of rent alone. While Harnett County is cheaper to live in than Raleigh, [data shows that more than half of a minimum wage employee's salary would go to rent alone.](https://www.rentdata.org/harnett-county-nc/2020)

With job openings plentiful, workers who felt unsafe or mistreated now feel empowered to leave.

"That's exactly what happened with me," Bolden said. "That's why I'm at where I am right now. I get treated way better where I am, way better."

Because employers are desperate for help, workers could demand better pay, or go elsewhere to get it.

If the pandemic has proven anything, it has shown that many office jobs can be done at home, according to the employer agency Roth Staffing.

Ross Bowman, a senior staffing professional with Roth Staffing, said that employees are looking for flexibility. In a hot job market like the Triangle, employees have many options.

Companies that discourage their employees to work from home, for example, are not going to get as many new employees, according to Bowman.

"I've talked with probably a hundred people in the last few weeks, and the number one thing is flexibility," he said. "Candidates are looking at that as a bigger value versus compensation and benefits. People are looking at the time they're saving in terms of commuting."

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

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

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

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

**Pay increases, result in higher worker productivity , Ray Fisman and Michel Luca, economists from Boston University, say during 2021:**

Ray Fisman and Michael Luca 21 (Ray Fisman and Michael Luca, ) How Higher Wages Can Increase Profits 1-21-2021 WSJ https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-case-for-higher-wages-in-hard-times-11611241084 //DebateDrills TJ

Some of the best evidence for the benefits of higher pay appears in a recently released working paper by Harvard University doctoral students Natalia Emanuel and Emma Harrington that examined wages and productivity among warehouse workers at a Fortune 500 online retailer (kept anonymous in the study). The researchers looked at **the effects of a 2019 pay increase** that looks a lot like the ones recently announced by Chobani and Wayfair—**from about $16 an hour to $18.** Prior to the increase, **employees moved an average of 4.92 boxes per hour. A $1 pay increase boosted this figure by a third of a box.** Higher wages also led to a large drop in employee turnover: **a $1 increase reduced the quit rate by 19%.**

#### Higher Productivity leads to better firm results which increases economy.

**According to George Ward, a researcher at the Center for Economic Performance, say that during 2019:**

George Ward 19 (George Ward, Researcher at the Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics) It's official: happy employees mean healthy firms 7-18-2019 World Economic Forum https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/happy-employees-and-their-impact-on-firm-performance //DebateDrills TJ

Of course, from this meta-analysis alone, we cannot make any strong causal claim about the effects of employee wellbeing on productivity or firm performance. But there is both a theoretical and an empirical body of research that points in this direction. Human relations theory states that higher employee wellbeing is associated with higher morale, which, in turn, leads to higher productivity (Strauss, 1968). Conversely, expectancy theories of motivation postulate that employee productivity follows from the expectation of rewards (including higher wellbeing) generated by eliciting effort (Lawler and Porter, 1967; Schwab and Cummings, 1970).

Emotions theory argues that employees’ emotional states affect their productivity (Staw et al, 1994), and in particular, that positive emotions lead to heightened motivation and hence better job outcomes and organisational citizenship (Isen and Baron, 1991\*). A further channel is through positive, stimulating arousal, which can result in more creativity (Isen et al, 1987) or positive changes in attitudes and behaviour (Baumeister et al, 2007). In line with these predictions, Oswald et al (2015) show in a laboratory experiment that increases in wellbeing are strongly associated with increases in productivity of up to 12 percent in a real effort task with incentives. In another study, De Neve and Oswald (2012) find that individuals who reported higher levels of life satisfaction at ages 16, 18 and 22 have significantly higher levels of earnings later in life. This holds even when comparing siblings and holding constant a wide range of observables, including education, intelligence, physical health and self-esteem.

Employee wellbeing also seems to pay off on the bottom line of business: Edmans (2011, 2012) studies the relationship between employee satisfaction and long-run stock market returns using a value-weighted portfolio of the ‘100 Best Companies to Work for in America’. He shows that during the period from 1984 to 2011, these companies had between 2.3 and 3.8 percent higher returns than the industry average.

## C3 Democracy

#### Unions solves is civic engagement. Strikes increase democratic participation which reinvigorates democracy.

Sean McElwee, 2015 (Sean McElwee is an American policy advisor, data scientist, and activist. McElwee currently serves as the Executive Director of Data for Progress, a progressive think tank and polling firm he co-founded in 201,) The American Prospect, 9-16-15, “How Unions Boost Democratic Participation,” <https://prospect.org/labor/unions-boost-democratic-participation/> // DebateDrills AP

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."

#### Labor unions end up solving monopolization of Governmental Power. Recognition reaffirms basic liberties and achieves perfect power distribution

Maina Kiai, 2017 (Mr. Maina Kiai is a Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association and serves as an independent expert for the UN Human Rights Council.) “UN Rights Expert: ‘Fundamental Right to Strike Must be Preserved’” UN Human Rights, 3-9-2017 <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21328&LangID=E> // DebateDrills AP

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 favourable 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 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 to 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.’

Thus, I affirm.