



Novice AC

I Affirm: Resolved – A just government ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.

Advantage 1: Economic Inequality

Unions give workers enough leverage to effectively negotiate with their employers.

Hayes '21 - Hayes, Lydia, et al. "Trade Unions and Economic Inequality." Institute of Employment Rights Journal, vol. 4, no., Pluto Journals, 2021, pp. 118–41, <https://doi.org/10.13169/insteplprighj.4.0.0118>. AK

How trade unions promote economic equality. **The economic clout of an employer is much stronger than the negotiating capacity of an individual worker** who needs to earn a living. Trade **unions aim to balance out this uneven power relationship.** As democratic organisations, trade unions represent their membership independently of managerial or government control. Having access to a collective voice through trade unions offers opportunities that are not otherwise available to individual workers. **Without trade unions,** the realities of working life mean that **individual workers are under pressure to simply accept the pay and conditions that an employer presents to them. To do otherwise risks missing out on the** chance of a **job** or being dismissed. The bargaining power of trade unions has the potential to defend existing employment conditions, so that **new workers are not brought in on lower rates of pay or forced to accept other terms which are inferior.** Even when a worker is well-established in a job, should an employer decide to make cut backs or change hours of work, it can be exceptionally difficult to protect pay or terms and conditions on an individual basis. Employers are attentive to economic peaks and troughs and they are acutely aware of the potential benefits of cheap replacement labour when employment opportunities are scarce. Trade unions can introduce some balance into an otherwise very one-sided situation by requiring that an employer negotiate with the whole workforce.

A right to strike for workers would improve working conditions, reduce inequality, and raise worker pay.

Myall '19 - James Myall [James is 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/> accessed 10/19/2021 //Marlborough JH

The **right of workers to organize and bargain with their employer** benefits all Mainers. **Collective bargaining leads to better wages, safer workplaces, and a fairer and more robust economy for everyone — not just union members.** **The right to strike is critical to collective organizing and bargaining.** Without it, Maine's public employees are unable to negotiate on a level playing field.

¶Maine's Legislature is considering a bill that would give public-sector workers the right to strike. MECEP supports the legislation, and is urging legislators to enact it. ¶**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.** ¶**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.[1] ¶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 wages, a more level playing field, and a fairer economy for all of us.

Unions reduce inequality

Kerrissey '15 - Kerrissey, Jasmine. "Collective Labor Rights and Income Inequality." American Sociological Review 80, no. 3 (2015): 626–53. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44289582>. AK

Class-based collective actors are central to understanding income inequality in industrialized democracies. Strong working-class organizational power, usually measured as union density, reduces inequality (Brady et al. 2013; Jacobs and Myers 2014; Western and Rosenfeld 2011). Moreover, the share of the national income that goes to labor relative to capital increases when workers' relative bargaining power is strong (Kristai 2010; Lin and Tomaskovic-Devey 2013). Scholars in the power resource tradition argue that class-based collective actors affect the distributive process at two points: directly through reducing pre-tax and transfer income inequality (market mechanisms) and indirectly through supporting state policies that bolster taxes and transfers (political mechanisms). Through markets, unions directly reduce inequality by securing better wages and benefits for large groups of workers (Bradley et al. 2003; Western and Rosenfeld 2011). Unions' ability to raise wages for substantial numbers of workers is partially affected by the existence of centralized bargaining structures (Kristai and Cohen 2007; Wallerstein 1999; but see Scheve and Stasavage 2009). However, even in decentralized contexts, like the United States, unions have had some success in raising wages for non-union workers through the threat of unionization (Freeman and Medoff 1984). Although unions typically aim to increase wages, then-ability to do so varies. For instance, beginning in the 1940s in the United States, unions had high density and were relatively successful in increasing wages across entire industries (Freeman and Medoff 1984). As union density fell at the end of the twentieth century, strikes declined and were less effective in achieving higher wages (Rhomborg 2012; Rosenfeld 2006). Moreover, the rise of financialization in the United States has shifted power away from workers and resulted in increased inequality (Lin and Tomaskovic-Devey 2013). However, even in this weak position, workers are less impoverished in highly unionized states (Brady et al. 2013). Worker organizations also affect inequality through political processes. Labor movements often support left parties and rally around policies that redistribute income. Unions influence elections and policies by mobilizing members to vote, protest, and work on political campaigns (Kerrissey and Schofer 2013; Norris 2002; Wood 2000). Through this collective political action, worker organizations aligned with social-democratic parties have been able to shift the relative bargaining power from capital toward labor (Bradley et al. 2003; Esping-Andersen 1985; Korpi 1989; Kristai 2010).

Income inequality kills one in three people in the US through structural violence.

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(Stephen, 2014, New Press, "Inequality Kills,"

<https://depts.washington.edu/eqhlth/pages/BezruchkaInequalityKillsBkPubInfo14.pdf>, accessed 6/30/17, pg. 194-195, CD)

Everyone in a society gains when children grow up to be healthy adults. The rest of the world seems to understand this simple fact, and only three countries in the world don't have a policy, at least on the books, for paid maternal leave – Liberia, Papua New Guinea, and the United States. What does that say about our understanding, or concern about the health of our youth? Differences in mortality rates are not just a statistical concern—they reflect suffering and pain for very real individuals and families. The higher mortality in the United States is an example of what Paul Farmer, the noted physician and anthropologist, calls structural violence. The forty-seven infant deaths occur every day because of the way society in the United States is structured, resulting in our health status being that of a middle-income country, not a rich country. There is growing evidence that the factor most responsible for the relatively poor health in the United States is the vast and rising inequality in wealth and income that we not only tolerate, but resist changing. Inequality is the central element, the upstream cause of the social disadvantage described in the IOM report. A political system that fosters inequality limits the attainment of health. The claim that economic inequality is a major reason for our poor health requires that several standard criteria for claiming causality are satisfied: the results are confirmed by many different studies by different investigators over different time periods; there is a dose-response relationship, meaning more inequality leads to worse health; no other contending explanation is posited; and the relationship is biologically plausible, with likely mechanisms through which inequality works. The field of study called stress biology of social comparisons is one such way inequality acts. Those studies confirm that all the criteria for linking inequality to poorer health are met, concluding that the extent of inequality in society reflects the range of caring and sharing, with more

unequal populations sharing less. Those who are poorer struggle to be accepted in society and the rich also suffer its effects. A recent Harvard study
estimated that about one death in three in this country results from our very high income inequality.
Inequality kills through structural violence. There is no smoking gun with this form of violence, which simply produces a lethally large social
and economic gap between rich and poor.

Solvency

Plan Text: The United States ought to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.

Conditions on the right to strike discourage unions from the practice of striking and lead them to agree to no-strike clauses.

Janice **Fine 2017**, Forum Response: The Right To Strike. Boston Review.

<https://bostonreview.net/forum/right-strike/janice-fine-fine-responds-pope>

As Pope, Bruno, and Kellman point out, the trouble started long ago. The principle underlying the National Labor Relations Act was a kind of industrial citizenship in which unions would be the vehicle and collective bargaining the mechanism through which American workers would have a say in their workplaces, industries, and economic policy more broadly. The theory of collective bargaining underwriting the act was that each side needed to be able to exercise economic power sufficient to compel the other to negotiate.

For workers, that fundamental power was the ability to withhold labor and stop production.

That power, however, was undermined from the beginning. The act never outlawed permanent striker replacement and a series of Supreme Court rulings even expanded employers' right to do so. A decade after its passage, **the**

Labor Management Relations Act of 1947 (also known as Taft-Hartley) **delivered major blows to labor's**

power by outlawing closed shops and secondary strikes. And, despite subsequent NLRB

decisions more favorable to unions, employers routinely engage in intimidation, firings,

lockouts, and striker-replacement actions. Justice, when it does come for affected workers, is

far too limited and far too late. Workers during a union drive have to contend with employer interference at a level that, as Gordon Lafer argues,

completely contradicts the American ideal of the free and fair election. Likewise, striking union workers are protected from permanent

replacement only under an extremely constricted set of conditions. Perhaps it is **for this reason** that **unions**

have accepted no-strike clauses in their contracts. Given how compromised the right to strike

actually is, why not trade it away?

Restrictions on the right to strike have reduced it to meaninglessness.

Pope et al. 17

James Gray Pope, et al, 2017, Pope is a Professor of Law and Sidney Reitman Scholar at Rutgers University, Ed Bruno (former director of the United Electrical Radio and Machine Workers of America, and past southern director for the National Nurses Union), and Peter Kellman (past president of the Southern Maine Labor Council and is currently working with the Movement Building/Education Committee of the Maine AFL-CIO)., The Right to Strike Boston Review, Spring 2017.

<https://bostonreview.net/forum/james-gray-pope-ed-bruno-peter-kellman-right-strike>

The prospects for union revival may seem bleaker than ever during the Trump administration, even as the triumph of right-wing populism makes more urgent what was already apparent: the need to build a labor movement that can fight for the interests of the working class in the face of corporate power.¶ But prospects are not as grim as they appear. Over the past decade, there has been an undeniable shift toward class politics, most visibly evidenced by Occupy Wall Street, the Bernie Sanders campaign, the Fight for Fifteen, and the rise of a Black Lives Matter movement that supports economic justice demands, including the right to organize. Building the labor movement in this period of danger and opportunity will require not only heeding Lerner's call for a strategic shift and extralegal action; **labor must also reclaim the right to strike and confront the deep structural disabilities that impede unions from challenging corporate power.** As Lerner diagnosed twenty years ago, **U.S. labor law blocks unions and workers from effective organizing and striking. Then as now, the law's protections for workers' rights amount to little more than paper guarantees, while its**

restrictions are downright deadly. Indeed the Committee on Freedom of Association of the International Labor Organization (ILO) has held that the United States is violating international standards by failing to protect the right to organize, by banning secondary strikes and boycotts across the board, and by allowing employers to permanently replace workers who strike. The ban on secondary strikes is especially debilitating, because it prevents workers who have economic power, such as organized grocery workers, from aiding workers who do not, for example unorganized packing house workers. If the grocery workers support striking packers by refusing to handle food packed by strikebreakers, they are said to be engaging in an illegal secondary strike. But the law cuts even deeper, deforming workers' organizations at their inception. As amended by the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947 (tagged by unionists as the "Slave Labor Law"), the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) confronts workers with a choice between two inadequate forms of organization: statutory "labor organizations," popularly known as unions, and "others," for example workers' centers that organize outside the statutory framework. At first glance, the choice seems obvious. Only unions can demand and engage in collective bargaining. But unions are subject to so many restrictions that some workers' organizations (such as the Restaurant Opportunities Centers United) are willing to forego collective bargaining in order to avoid them, while others (including the Coalition of Immokalee Workers) consider themselves lucky to be excluded from the NLRA altogether. In the 1960s Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers rejected NLRA coverage for farm workers on the ground that it would inscribe "a glowing epitaph on our tombstone."