#### **Our Value today is Justice. In such a society we should formulate our principles of justice from a starting point of equality and seeking mutual advantage for all members of society. This would result in principles of justice that everyone would consent to regardless of race, class, or creed. John Rawls, former Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University, writes,** Rawls, John. [John Rawls graduated from the Kent School in 1939, completed a BA at Princeton University in 1943, and received his Ph.D. from Princeton in 1950. He was also a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University (1952-1953). His academic career ranged from being an instructor at Princeton University (1950-1952) to serving as assistant and associate professor at Cornell University, where he became full professor in 1962. Beginning in 1979 he was James Bryant Conant Professor of Philosophy at Harvard University. His achievements included serving as president of the American Association of Political and Legal Philosophers (1970-1972) as well as of the Eastern Division of the American Philosophical Association (1974). He was also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The author of numerous articles, Rawls was best known for his monumental A Theory of Justice (1971).] *A Theory of Justice*. Revised, Harvard University Press, 1999,<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvkjb25m>. [GHS-AA] In justice as fairness the original position of equality corresponds to the state of nature in the traditional theory of the social contract. T**his original position is not, of course, thought of as an actual historical state of affairs, much less as a primitive condition of culture. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice. 2 Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does any one know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities,** his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. **The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. *This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances.* *Since* all are similarly situated and *no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement*** or bargain. For given the circumstances of the original position, the symmetry of everyone ’s relations to each other, this initial situation is fair between individuals as moral persons, that is, as rational beings with their own ends and capable, I shall assume, of a sense of justice. ***The original position is*,** one might say, ***the appropriate initial status quo, and thus the fundamental agreements reached in it are fair****.* This explains the propriety of the name “justice as fairness”: it conveys the idea that the principles of justice are agreed to in an initial situation that is fair. The name does not mean that the concepts of justice and fairness are the same, any more than the phrase “poetry as metaphor” means that the concepts of poetry and metaphor are the same. *Ju****stice as fairness begins,*** as I have said***, with one of the most general of all choices which persons might make together,*** namely***, with the choice of the first principles of a conception of justice which is to regulate all subsequent criticism and reform of institutions. Then, having chosen a conception of justice, we can suppose that they are to choose a constitution and a legislature to enact laws, and so on, all in accordance with the principles of justice initially agreed upon. Our social situation is just if it is such that by this sequence of hypothetical agreements we would have contracted into the general system of rules which defines it.* Moreover, *assuming that the original position does determine a set of principles*** (that is, that a particular conception of justice would be chosen)**, it will then be true that *whenever social institutions satisfy these principles those engaged in them can say to one another that they are cooperating on terms to which they would agree if they were free and equal persons*** whose relations with respect to one another were fair. They could all view their arrangements as meeting the stipulations which they would acknowledge in an initial situation that embodies widely accepted and reasonable constraints on the choice of principles. *The general recognition of this fact would provide the basis for a public acceptance of the corresponding principles of justice.* No society can, of course, be a scheme of cooperation which men enter voluntarily in a literal sense; each person finds himself placed at birth in some particular position in some particular society, and the nature of this position materially affects his life prospects. Yet *a society satisfying the principles of justice as fairness comes as close as a society can to being a voluntary scheme, for it meets the principles which free and equal persons would assent to under circumstances that are fair.* In this sense its members are autonomous and the obligations they recognize self-imposed.

**NEXT**

#### **Structural violence occurs when people are systematically excluded and harmed for arbitrary factors. Opotow 01 further explains:** **Opotow 01 [Susan Opotow, Opotow is a social psychologist and researcher at the City University of New York (CUNY). Additionally, Opotow has written/edited for Peace & Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology and Past President of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, Peace, Conflict, and Violence: Peace Psychology for the 21st Centuryl Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 2001, https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/u.osu.edu/dist/b/7538/files/2014/10/Chapter-8-Social-Injustice-Opotow-1jaya7m.pdfBoth structural and direct violence result from moral justifications and rationalizations.** Morals are the norms, rights, entitlements, obligations, responsibilities, and duties that shape our sense of justice and guide our behavior with others (Deutsch, 1985). **Morals operationalize our sense of justice by identifying what we owe to whom, whose needs, views, and well-being count, and whose do not.** Our morals apply to people we value, which define who is inside our scope of justice (or “moral community”), such as family members, friends, compatriots, and coreligionists (Deutsch, 1974, 1985; Opotow, 1990; Staub, 1989). **We extend considerations of fairness to them, share community resources with them, and make sacrifices for them that foster their well- being** (Opotow, 1987, 1993). We see other kinds of people such as enemies or strangers outside our scope of justice; they are morally excluded. Gender, ethnicity, religious identity, age, mental capacity, sexual orientation, and political affiliation are some criteria used to define moral exclusion. Excluded people can be hated and viewed as “vermin” or “plague” or they can be seen as expendable non-entities. In either case, disadvantage, hardship, and exploitation inflicted on them seems normal, acceptable, and just—as “the way things are” or the way they “ought to be.” Fairness and deserving seem irrelevant when applied to them and harm befalling them elicits neither remorse, outrage, nor demands for restitution; instead, harm inflicted on them can inspire celebration. Many social issues and controversies, such as aid to school drop-outs, illegal immigrants, “welfare moms,” people who are homeless, substance abusers, and those infected with HIV are essentially moral debates about who deserves public resources, and thus, ultimately, about moral inclusion. When we see other people’s circumstances to be a result of their moral failings, moral exclusion seems warranted. But when we see others’ circumstances as a result of structural violence, moral exclusion seems unwarranted and unjust. While it is psychologically more comfortable to perceive harm-doers to be evil or demented, we each have boundaries for justice. Our moral obligations are stronger toward those close to us and weaker toward those who are distant. When the media reports suffering and death in Cambodia, El Salvador, Nicaragua, the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, we often fail—as a nation, as com- munities, and as individuals—to protest or to provide aid. Rationalizations include insufficient knowledge of the political dynamics, the futility of doing much of use, and not knowing where to begin. Our tendency to exclude people is fostered by a number of normal perceptual tendencies: 1. Social categorization. Our tendency to group and classify objects, including social categories, is ordinarily innocuous, facilitating acquisition of information and memory (Tajfel & Wilkes, 1963). Social categorizations can become invidious, however, when they serve as a basis for rationalizing structural inequality and social injustice. For example, race is a neutral physical characteristic, but it often becomes a value-loaded label, which generates unequal treatment and outcomes (Archer, 1985; Tajfel, 1978). 2. Evaluative judgments. Our tendency to make simple, evaluative, dichotomous judgments (e.g., good and bad, like and dislike) is a fundamental feature of human perception. **Evaluative judgments have cognitive, affective, and moral components. From a behavioral, evolutionary, and social learning perspective, evaluative judgments have positive adaptive value because they provide feedback that protects our well-being** (Edwards & von Hippel, 1995; Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). Evaluative judgments can support structural violence and exclusionary thinking, however, when they lend a negative slant to perceived difference. In-group-out-group and we-them thinking can result from social comparisons made on dimensions that maximize a positive social identity for oneself or one’s group at the expense of others (Tajfel, 1982).

#### **Thus, the value criterion (or standard) is mitigating structural violence. Moral inclusion is a necessary precondition to all other ethical theories as we can’t form those moral theories until all those who are affected are included in it.**

**NEXT**

### **Contention 1 Worker Agency**

#### **The right to strike is key to embracing new relations. The right to strike causes community building that forms new relations that break past the binary of worker and employer**

Green 19 [Ken Green, 10-29-2019“How Unions Build Strength Through Community Engagement”<https://www.uniontrack.com/blog/community-engagement>] AX **Now, maybe more than ever before, labor unions need all the support they can get to defend themselves and build up memberships.** The current political climate has been devastating for workers’ rights. Anti-union legislation like [right-to-work laws](https://www.uniontrack.com/blog/right-to-work-states), blows to [collective bargaining](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/crime-and-courts/2019/05/17/collective-bargaining-iowa-legislature-afscme-61-kim-reynolds-supreme-court-unions/3705134002/) and the [spread of misinformation](https://www.uniontrack.com/blog/fight-back-against-fake-news) about unions is making it extremely difficult for unions to do what they are built to do — advocate for and bargain on behalf of workers**. To combat the onslaught of anti-unionism and take the labor movement into the future, labor leaders are searching for ways to build up support from advocates and allies. One grassroots strategy they are focusing on is engaging their local communities.** “We must engage our communities and all their diversity,” says [Kenneth Rigmaiden](https://www.iupat.org/news/community-building-for-a-bold-future/), general president of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT). Why is a high level of engagement with local communities so important to labor unions? Because **when unions and communities work together, good things happen.Unions need communities to enhance their memberships and support their endeavors.** As the [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers’](http://www.ibew.org/Civic-and-Community-Engagement) (IBEW) Civic and Community Engagement Department emphasizes, community engagement is the cornerstone of improving the union’s standing in local neighborhoods. **The public, in turn, needs unions to boost working and economic conditions in their communities.** To help foster this relationship, unions must reach out and build a presence in local communities. American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President [Randi Weingarten](https://www.aft.org/american-labor-movement-crossroads) stresses that unions can no longer focus solely on themselves or the four walls of the workplace to improve wages and working conditions. She emphasizes the need for unions to build power through community partnerships, saying “Community must become the new ‘density’ of American unionism.” That’s because “communities are the lifeblood of movements,” writes [Douglas Williams](https://thesouthlawn.org/2013/05/18/one-big-union-why-community-engagement-is-needed-for-labor-victories-in-the-south/), a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Alabama who researches the labor movement and labor policy. Communities can elect the pro-labor candidates to community leadership positions. **Communities can rally around striking workers when they stand in solidarity on a picket line. As such, engaging community advocates should be a primary focus of labor leaders in their efforts to build union strength,** Williams says. On the other side of the equation, community members have an interest in a union’s accomplishments. **Communities need unions to improve economic conditions by boosting workers’ wages and benefits through collective bargaining. Stronger unions means stronger communities. When unions secure wins for their members, they also make gains for nonunion workers in the community. “Union members are stewards of the public good, empowering the individual through collective action and solidarity,**” explains [Andy Stern](https://www.amacad.org/sites/default/files/daedalus/downloads/13_spring_daedalus_Articles.pdf), president emeritus of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU). “Being a member of a union has greater implications than working for oneself, or one’s workplace, to gain benefits for yourselves,” says the [Independent Education Union of Australia (IEU) WA Branch](https://ieuwa.org.au/community-engagement/). “**Being ‘union’ also means extending the idea of fairness and solidarity to the community**.” By engaging the community, unions can demonstrate how their efforts benefit everyone, not just union members. That concept is the underlying reason why the recent teacher strikes were so successful. The Teacher Strikes Were a Case Study in Community Engagement B**efore teachers in West Virginia started their statewide strike in 2018, they reached out to community stakeholders to explain their actions, garner support, solicit advice, and plan for potential hardships to teachers and students.** “The teachers felt that it was time to meet with parents and community residents to ask how public schools could better serve West Virginia’s children,” writes [Eleanor J. Bader](https://truthout.org/articles/unions-forge-partnerships-with-communities-for-the-common-good/), an English teacher at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York. Those efforts resulted in individuals and businesses in the community preparing packed lunches for the kids during the strike and organizing groups to provide child care for working families, who needed somewhere for their kids to go during the day. The teachers also took advantage of the power of social media to engage the public by communicating their messages and the progress of their strikes. “Educators communicating online played a key role in forming grassroots groups that are storming statehouses and holding demonstrations,” writes AP reporter [Melissa Daniels](https://www.wvpublic.org/post/teachers-use-social-media-us-uprisings-fight-funding#stream/0). That constant flow of information kept the public connected to the mission of the teacher strikes. This community-based approach to the strikes helped earn the teachers the support they needed to withstand nine days of organized action. **Community engagement bought the teachers the time they needed to secure key victories. It was a strategy that carried across to strikes in other states over the last couple of years.**

**NEXT**

#### **Right to Strike defends liberty for workers to both set and pursue their own ends and resist coercion from others.Gourevitch ’18: Gourevitch, Alex. “A Radical Defense of the Right to Strike.” Jacobin 2018. https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression**

**Workers have an interest in resisting the oppression of class society by using their collective power to reduce, or even overcome, that oppression.** Their interest is a liberty interest in a double sense. First, resistance to that class-based oppression carries with it, at least implicitly, a demand for freedoms not yet enjoyed. *A higher wage expands workers’ freedom of choice. Expanded labor rights increase workers’ collective freedom to influence the terms of employment.* Whatever the concrete set of issues, workers’ strike demands are always also a demand for control over portions of one’s life that they do not yet enjoy. Second, **strikes don’t just aim at winning more freedom — they are themselves expressions of freedom**. When workers walk out, they’re using their own individual and collective agency to win the liberties they deserve. The same capacity for self-determination that workers invoke to demand more freedom is the capacity they exercise when winning their demands. Freedom, not industrial stability or simply higher living standards, is the name of their desire. Put differently, t**he right to strike has both an intrinsic and instrumental relation to freedom**. It has intrinsic value as an (at least implicit) demand for self-emancipation. **And it has** instrumental value insofar as **the** strike is an effective **means for resisting the oppressiveness** of a class society **and achieving new freedoms**. But if all this is correct, and the *right to strike is something that we should defend*, then it also has to be meaningful. **The right loses its connection to workers’ freedom if they have little chance of exercising it effectively**. Otherwise they’re simply engaging in a *symbolic act of defiance* — laudable, perhaps, but not a tangible means of fighting oppression. The right to strike must therefore cover at least some of the coercive tactics that make strikes potent, like sit-downs and mass pickets. **It is** therefore often **perfectly justified for strikers to exercise their right to strike** by using these tactics, **even when** these tactics are **illegal**. Still, the question remains: **why should the right to strike be given moral priority over other basic liberties?** The reason is not just that liberal capitalism produces economic oppression but that the economic oppression that workers face is in part created and sustained by the very economic and civil liberties that liberal capitalism cherishes. **Workers find themselves oppressed because of the way property rights, freedom of contract, corporate authority, and tax and labor law operate.** **Deeming these liberties inviolable doesn’t foster less oppressive, exploitative outcomes, as its defenders insist — quite the opposite**. *The right to strike has a stronger claim to be protecting a zone of activity that serves the aims of justice itself* — coercing people into relations of less oppressive social cooperation. **Simply put, to argue for the right to strike is to prioritize democratic freedoms over property rights.**

**NEXT**

### **Contention 2- Inequality**

#### **Power – it reverses power relationships and challenges the structure of economic control itself – that alleviates domination, Gourevitch 4:**

Gourevitch, A.. “Quitting Work but Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike.” Perspectives on Politics 14 (2016): 307 - 323. //LHP AV Accessed 7/4/21

Quitting the work not the job We now have a way of explaining the right to strike as something decidedly more modern than just residual protection of some feudal guild privilege. ***The right to strike springs organically from*** the fact of ***structural domination***. ***Striking is a way of resisting*** that ***domination*** at the point in that structure at which workers find themselves – the particular job they are bargaining over. It is not that workers believe they have some special privilege but quite the opposite. ***It is their lack of privilege, their vulnerability, that generates the claim. Structural domination makes its*** most immediate appearance in the ***threat of being exploited*** by a particular employer, even though the point of structural domination is that workers can be exploited by any potential employer. ***The sharpest form that the structural domination takes is through the threat of being fired,*** or of never being hired in the first place. The claim that ***strikers make*** to their job is therefore, in the first instance, a dramatization of ***the fact that their relationship is not voluntary***, it is not accidental and contingent. ***They are always already forced*** to be ***in a contractual relationship*** with some employer or another. ***The refusal to perform work*** while retaining the right to the job is a way of ***bring***ing to the fore ***this social and structural element in their condition.*** ***It*** ***vivifies the real nature of the production relationship*** that workers find themselves in. ***Quitting the work but not the job is a way of saying that*** this ***society*** is not and ***cannot be just a system of voluntary exchanges***. There is an underlying structure of control, maintained through the system of contracts, that even the ‘most voluntary’ arrangements conceal. This is not just a dramaturgical fact about strikes, though the drama has, in many cases, been nearly Greek in its intensity and tragedy***. It is a point about power***. It would not have the drama if it were not a power play. By demanding the job as a matter of right workers do not just publicize their domination, ***they attempt to challenge the forcing to which they are subject***. ***Limiting the employer’s ability to make contracts with others, and preventing other workers from taking those jobs, is a way of reversing the power relationship***. It is a way of neutralizing the threat of losing the job, which is the most concrete, immediate point of contact with that background structure of domination. ***If you cannot lose your job, you are less vulnerable, less immediately economically dependent. Of course, this does not do away with the background structure itself, but a particular strike can never do that***. Though even here, there are times when a strike, as it becomes a more generalized rejection of structural domination – say in large-scale sympathy strikes or ***general strikes*** – ***can*** begin to ***challenge*** the ***broad structure of economic control itself*** (Brecher 2014). As we have said, this is a challenge to the market logic that begins from within, at the location of the strike itself. At that point in the system, ***strikers temporarily reverse the relationships of power by eliminating that employers’ ability to use the threat*** of job-loss against them. They do that not just by claiming the job but by claiming it as a matter of right. The thought is that the ***exploitation*** of ***workers is unjustifiable***, an unjustifiability that appears in the terms of the employment itself. Workers have the right to the job, and therefore to interfere with the employer’s property rights and other workers’ contract rights, because it is unjustifiable to subject workers to exploitative conditions. To be sure, many strikes and many strikers never articulate the argument in this language. But the point is not what workers always explicitly say, but rather what they do and what that doing presupposes. I am reconstructing the ideal presuppositions of a strike, and in particular, how to think about the peculiar set of assumptions about the right to a job. We have seen that it is no atavistic recovery of traditional rights and guild privileges but is a way of resisting a thoroughly modern form of social domination from a point within that structure of domination. Again, ***facing a freedom to quit the job but not the work, workers assert a right to quit working but keep the job***. To put this all another way, ***though strikes are still about bargaining***, and in that sense like market exchanges, ***they are simultaneously a challenge to the market as the appropriate standard by which to judge the fairness of workers’ compensation***. The market is unfair because of workers’ structural disadvantage. Over and against the market value, strikers argue that there are shared, or at least shareable, standards of fair compensation that employers should adhere to. While here again we see the echoes of feudal theories of ‘just price’ and equity jurisprudence (Horwitz 1977, 160-211), we must note that in principle the claim is not, or does not have to be, based on special privilege. Rather, it begins by challenging the view that labor ‘freely’ finds its value on the market. ***Workers are always already in relationships with employers and they cannot leave the basic relationship of earning money only by selling labor-power, no matter how many jobs they might quit***. The standards we use for evaluating those kinds of forced relationships, like the state, are different, based on shared conceptions of justice and human need, not private agreement. Two final observations before we move to the workplace itself. If the foregoing analysis is correct then we can get a better sense of the way a right to strike relates to the rights of employers and replacement workers. The right to strike does not have to include the claim that employers have no right to use their property to pursue their own interests. It just means employers have no right to use their property in ways that allow them to exploit workers. That is why, from within the theory of the right to strike, employers do not have a unilateral right to hire whomever they please on whatever terms they please. If that latter right is permitted then, of course, employers may take advantage of the fact that every propertyless worker needs a job. Further, the right to strike does not have to mean replacement workers have no right to pursue their interests and make labor contracts. Rather, it means they do not have a right to use that power to reproduce the system of structural domination that puts all workers at an unfair disadvantage. That is why they may not take jobs that striking workers refuse to perform.

**NEXT**

#### **Strikes get stuff done and help solve rising inequality, but recent pushback from major corporations means that we are losing ground. Only ensuring unconditional right to strike will solveShierholz 20** [**Heidi Shierholz**](https://www.epi.org/people/heidi-shierholz/) **Posted January, 1-27-2020, "Weakened labor movement leads to rising economic inequality," Economic Policy Institute, https://www.epi.org/blog/weakened-labor-movement-leads-to-rising-economic-inequality//SJJK**

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 r***estoring 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](https://www.epi.org/blog/the-pro-act-giving-workers-more-bargaining-power-on-the-job/), 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.