## Intro

#### I affirm the resolution “Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.”

#### For clarity, I would like to define the following words:

#### A just government is a morally good government. The resolution is a question of what a good government would do, so even if there were no perfectly good governments now, we should take the action that would make a government good.

#### An unconditional right of workers to strike, defined by the National Labor Relations Board, is a strike that has its

[National Labor Relations Board; “Legislative History of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947: Volume 1,” Jan 1985; <https://play.google.com/store/books/details?id=7o1tA__v4xwC&rdid=book-7o1tA__v4xwC&rdot=1>] Justin

\*\*Edited for gendered language

As for the so-called absolute or unconditional right to strike—there are no absolute rights that do not have their corresponding responsibilities. Under our American Anglo-Saxon system, each individual is entitled to the maximum of freedom, provided however (and this provision is of first importance), his [their] freedom has due regard for the rights and freedoms of others. The very safeguard of our freedoms is the recognition of this fundamental principle. I take issue very definitely with the suggestion that there is an absolute and unconditional right to concerted action (which after all is what the strike is) which endangers the health and welfare of our people in order to attain a selfish end.

#### Thus, I will be defending this model of an unconditional right to strike for the rest of the round.

## FW

#### My value is morality, because the word “ought” implies a moral obligation according to the Merriam Webster dictionary.

#### My value criterion is respecting freedom.

#### To respect someone’s freedom, it entails allowing them to make their own decisions and choices without unnecessarily interfering with them. For example, murder would be a violation of freedom since it would interfere with another person’s ability to make their decisions because they would be killed.

#### For everyone to be able to respect other’s freedoms, their own freedoms must also be respected because they would need to the freedom to respect others in the first place. It would not make sense for me to be able to murder you but for you to be unable to murder me, so rights must be equal – what can be guaranteed to me must also be guaranteed to you.

#### We have a duty to respect freedom

#### [1] It’s the only way to hold people accountable for their decisions. Being able to consciously decide what to do means that you can be held responsible for that action – if I were to accidentally bump into you, I would not be considered a bad person because I did not use my freedom to make that decision, but if I were to push you over on purpose, I would.

#### [2] To find a truth claim, we must debate in round. However, that assumes that there is freedom to do so, so it’s a prerequisite to action. Hoppe writes:

From the Economics of Laissez Faire to The Ethics of Libertarianism, Hans-Hermann Hoppe, in Man, Economy, and Liberty: Essays in Honor of Murray N. Rothbard, The Ludwig von Mises Institute Auburn University

First, it should be noted that such a position assumes that at least the question of whether or not value judgments or normative statements can be justified is itself a cognitive problem. If this were not assumed, Mises could not even say what he evidently says and claims to be the case. His position simply could not exist as an arguable intellectual position. At first glance this does not seem to take one very far. It still seems to be a far cry from this insight to the actual proof that normative statements can be justified and, moreover that it is only the libertarian ethic which can be defended. This impression is wrong, however, and there is already much more won here than might be suspected. The argument shows us that **any truth claim, the claim connected with any proposition that it is true, objective or valid (all terms used synonymously here), is and must be raised and decided upon in the course of an argumentation.** And since it cannot be disputed that this is so ([since] one cannot communicate and argue that one cannot communicate and argue), and **it must be assumed that everyone knows what it means to claim something to be true** ([since] one cannot deny this statement without claiming its negation to be true), this very fact has been aptly called "the a priori of communication and argumentation." 16 Now arguing never consists of just free-floating propositions claiming to be true. Rather, **argumentation is always an activity**, too. But then, **given that truth claims are raised and decided upon in argumentation and that argumentation, aside from whatever it is that is said in its course, is a practical affair, then it follows that intersubjectively meaningful norms must exist—precisely those which make some action an argumentation—which have a special cognitive status in that they are the practical [as] preconditions of objectivity and truth.** Hence, one reaches the conclusion that norms must indeed be assumed to be justifiable as valid. **It is simply impossible to argue otherwise, because the ability to argue so would in fact already presuppose the validity of those norms which underlie any argumentation whatever**. In contradistinction to the natural rights theorists, though, one sees that the answer to the question of which ends can or cannot be justified is not to be read off from the wider concept of human nature but from the narrower one of argumentation. And with this, then, **the peculiar role of reason in determining the contents of ethics can be given a precise description; in clear contrast to the role of reason in establishing empirical laws of nature, in determining moral laws reason can claim to yield results which can be shown to be valid a priori. It only makes explicit what is already implied in the concept of argumentation itself;** and in analyzing any actual norm proposal its task is merely confined to analyzing whether or not it is logically consistent with the very ethics which the proponent must presuppose as valid insofar as he is able to make his proposal at all.

#### To clarify, my framework does not value the ability to do anything you want, but rather the ability to decide what you want to do.

Arthur Ripstein, a philosophy professor, writes:, (Arthur Ripstein, Arthur Ripstein is Professor of Law and Philosophy and University Professor. He was appointed to the Department of Philosophy in 1987, promoted to Full Professor in 1996, appointed to the Faculty of Law in 1999, and appointed to the rank of University Professor in 2016. He received a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh, a master’s degree in law from Yale, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Manitoba. He was Chair of the Philosophy Department 2011-14 and Acting Chair 2019-20., 2009, accessed on 8-18-2020, Harvard University Press, "Force and Freedom",) NP 8/4/16. rct st

**Independence is the basic principle of right. It guarantees equal free- dom, and so requires that no person be subject to the choice of another.** The idea of independence is similar to one that has been the target of many objections. The basic form of almost all of these focuses on the fact that **any set of rules prohibits some acts that people would otherwise do**, so that, for example, **laws prohibiting personal injury** and property dam- age **put limits on the ability of people to do as they wish.** Because differ- ent **people have incompatible wants, to let one person do what [they] want[] will typically require preventing others from doing what they want.** Thus, it has been contended, **freedom cannot even be articulated as a political value, because freedoms always come into conflict,** and **the only way to mediate those conflicts is by appealing to goods other than freedom.** As I will explain in more detail in Chapter 2, such an objection has some force against freedom understood as the ability to do whatever you wish, but fails to engage Kant’s conception of independence. **Limits on indepen- dence generate a set of restrictions that are by their nature equally appli- cable to all.** Their **generality depends on the** fact that they **abstract from** what Kant calls **the “matter” of choice—the particular purposes being pursued—and focus instead on the capacity to set purposes without hav- ing them set by others.** **What you can accomplish depends on what oth- ers are doing—someone else can frustrate your plans by getting the last quart of milk in the store. If they do so, they don’t interfere with your in- dependence, because they impose no limits on your ability to use your powers to set and pursue your own purposes. They** just change the world in ways that **make your means useless for the particular purpose you would have set. Their entitlement to change the world in those ways just is their right to independence.** In the same way, your ability to enter into cooperative activities with others depends upon their willingness to co- operate with you, and their entitlement to accept or decline your invita- tions is simply their right to independence

#### That brings me to my case.

## Contention

### 1

#### Contention 1 is preventing coercion.

#### Without strikes, workers are subject to coercion – employers can force them to work overtime and without pay and say that it’s part of the “contract.” Strikes allow workers to protest unsafe or dangerous working conditions.

Celine McNicholas, director of policy affairs at the Economic Policy Institute, states:, Economic Policy Institute, “Workers are striking during the coronavirus: Labor law must be reformed to strengthen this fundamental right”, Celine McNicholas is the director of policy and government affairs/general counsel at the Economic Policy Institute, Celine McNicholas is the director of policy and government affairs/general counsel at the Economic Policy Institute, Margaret Poydock: B.S., Political Communication, Emerson College, URL: <https://www.epi.org/blog/thousands-of-workers-have-gone-on-strike-during-the-coronavirus-labor-law-must-be-reformed-to-strengthen-this-fundamental-right/>, KR

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed much about work in the United States: There have been countless examples of workers speaking out against unsafe work conditions and demanding personal protective equipment (PPE) to try and stay healthy and safe on the job. We also have seen that essential workers are often not paid commensurate with the critical nature of their work. Few U.S. workers have access to paid sick time or paid leave of any kind. And, when workers have advocated for health and safety protections or wage increase, they have often been retaliated against, and even fired for doing so. As a result, many workers have decided to strike in an effort to have their voices heard.

Even before the pandemic, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) showed an upsurge in major strike activity in 2018 and 2019, marking a 35-year high for the number of workers involved in a major work stoppage over a two-year period. Further, 2019 recorded the greatest number of work stoppages involving 20,000 or more workers since at least 1993, when the BLS started providing data that made it possible to track work stoppages by size. In fact, after decades of decline, strike activity surged in 2018, with 485,200 workers involved in major work stoppages—a nearly twenty-fold increase from 25,300 workers in 2017. The surge in strike activity continued in 2019, with 425,500 workers involved in major work stoppages. On average in 2018 and in 2019, 455,400 workers were involved in major work stoppages—the largest two-year average in 35 years.

What is the right to strike and who has it?

Most private-sector workers in the United States are guaranteed the right to strike under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA). Section 7 of the Act grants workers the right “to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection.” This allows private-sector workers to engage in concerted activities such as strikes, regardless of whether the worker is in a union or covered by a collective bargaining contract. However, those in a union are better situated to engage in a long-term strike through strike funds. There is no federal law that gives public-sector workers the right to strike, but a dozen states grant public-sector workers the right to strike.

In general, there are two types of strikes: economic strikes and unfair labor practice strikes. In an economic strike, workers withhold their labor as leverage when bargaining for better pay and working conditions. While workers in economic strikes retain their status as employees and cannot be discharged, their employer has the right to permanently replace them. In an unfair labor practice strike, workers withhold their labor to protest their employer engaging in activities that they regard as a violation of labor law. Workers in an unfair labor practice strike cannot legally be discharged or permanently replaced.

However, not all strikes are protected under the law. For example, it is currently unlawful for workers to be involved in “secondary” strikes, which are strikes aimed at an employer other than the primary employer (for example, when workers from one company strike in solidarity with another company’s workers). If a strike is deemed an “intermittent strike”—when workers strike on-and-off over a period of time—it is not protected as a lawful strike by the NLRA. In general, a strike is also unlawful if the collective bargaining agreement between a union and the employer is in effect and has a “no-strike, no-lockout” clause.

What data do we have on strikes?

Unfortunately, there are major data limitations around strikes. As a result, it is impossible to know the full extent of strike activity throughout the U.S. The main government source for strike data is the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on major work stoppages. However, BLS data only include information on work stoppages involving 1,000 or more workers that last at least one full shift. Unfortunately, comprehensive data on work stoppages that involve fewer than 1,000 workers, or that last less than one full shift, are not readily available from BLS or other sources.

The BLS’s monthly data on work stoppages do not capture any strikes directly related to the coronavirus pandemic. However, it is evident essential workers are going on strike as seen in the recent walkouts organized by Amazon, Instacart, and Target workers as well as the dozens of strikes organized by fast food and delivery workers. Consequently, there is a large gap in knowledge about the true extent of strikes that occur during the coronavirus pandemic and beyond.

Based on the very limited data available, the resurgence of strike activity in recent years has given over a million workers an active role in demanding improvements in their pay and working conditions. Essential workers during the coronavirus pandemic are continuing this trend by demanding better pay and safer working conditions from their employers. However, without comprehensive data, it’s impossible to understand the scope of how many workers are utilizing their fundamental right to strike. This knowledge gap makes it difficult for policymakers to adequately address the needs for workers in the United States, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics should be provided funding to gather comprehensive data on worker strikes. But even with the limited knowledge we have, it’s evident that strikes are an effective tool to improve the pay and working conditions of working people. Therefore, strengthening the right to strike for workers needs to be at the heart of labor law reform going forward.

#### Strikes allow workers to protest against unfair working conditions.

Sylvester Chima, a bioethics researcher, adds on: (Sylvester C Chima, 1Programme of Bio & Research Ethics and Medical Law, Nelson R Mandela School of Medicine & School of Nursing and Public Health, College of Health Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa, 12-19-2013, accessed on 10-4-2021, PubMed Central (PMC), "Global medicine: Is it ethical or morally justifiable for doctors and other healthcare workers to go on strike?", <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B64>)

It has been suggested that doctor and HCW strikes can create a tension between the obligation on doctors and other HCWs to provide adequate care to current patients versus the need to advocate for improved healthcare services for future patients and for society in general [[2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B2),[31](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B31)]. There is also a potential conflict between doctors' role in advocating for improved healthcare service for others versus the need to advocate for justifiable wages for self and the fulfilment of basic biological needs like all humans [[4](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B4),[32](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B32)]. **It has been suggested that since strikes are considered a fundamental right or entitlement during collective bargaining and labour negotiations [**[**33**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B33)**]. Therefore to deny any employee the right to strike would be an argument for enslavement of such an employee, because this would simply mean that whatever the circumstances-such an individual** must work! A situation deemed to be both ethically and morally indefensible [[4](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B4)]. It is pertinent to observe that there is an on-going paradigm shift in the organization of healthcare services and doctors' employment options with a change in the role of doctors from self-employment, and medical practice based on benevolent paternalism, to consumer rights and managed healthcare [[2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B2)]. Historically, doctors had the sole responsibility within the doctor-patient relationship, to determine the costs of medical care to their patients, however, current trends show that doctors are increasingly becoming employees of managed healthcare organizations (HCOs) or employees of public health services [[2](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B2),[34](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B34)-[36](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3878318/#B36)].

#### Coercion violates freedoms – when I put you in a position where I can take advantage of you, I disrespect your freedom to make your own independent decisions since I can force you to do certain things against your will. An employer who forces their employee to work overtime makes them do things outside of their will. The right to strike solves – it protects the worker from the threat of being fired and allows them to protest against unfair working conditions. Given that SO many companies are exploiting their workers now because of the pandemic, worker rights are even more important to both jumpstart the economy and ensure that people can stay safe – striking is k2 reporting violations of things like healthcare which would otherwise be ignored.

### 2

#### Contention 2 is bargaining rights.

#### Because employees are dependent upon the goodwill of their employers, they have no choice but to accept the options presented to them, even if they aren’t good – quitting cannot solve because many workers have no alternatives.

Norman Bowie, professor at the University of Minnesota, writes: [Norman E., professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota "A Kantian Theory of Meaningful Work."  Springer, 01 July 1998.] LADI rct st

**The overwhelming number of people need to work to survive,** at least for a large portion of their lives. **There is a sense in which people are forced to work. When an assailant says, “Your wallet or your life,” you technically have a choice.** However, for many **this situation is the paradigm of coercion.** How close is the analogy between the assailant and **the requirements of the employer?** Admittedly, in good times the balance of power shifts somewhat, but in hard times **the balance of power is with the employer.** Most people have to take the terms of employment a they get them (Manning 2003). Someone wanting employment does not negotiate about whether or not to be tested for drugs, for example. If drug testing is the company policy, you either submit to the test or forfeit the job. **If you want a job, you agree to employment at will and to layoffs if management believes that they are necessary. Survival** for yourself and any dependents **requires it. As with the assailant, you technically have a choice, but** most **employees** argue they **have little choice about multiple important terms of employment. A** Kantian, in common with the pluralist school of industrial relations, maintains **that the imbalance between employer and employee ought to be addressed. Otherwise, industrial relations rests on an unethical foundation.**

#### Workers and their employers are on unequal grounds – without strikes, the employer can always threaten to fire the worker.

Alex Gourevitch, professor of Political science, writes: (Alex Gourevitch, I am an associate professor of political science in the Department of Political Science. I have been an assistant professor at McMaster University, a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Brown University's Political Theory Project, and a College Fellow at Harvard University. I received my Ph.D in political science from Columbia University in 2010., June 2016, accessed on 10-4-2021, American Political Science Association, "Quitting Work but Not the Job: Liberty and the Right to Strike", doi:10.1017/S1537592716000049)//st \*brackets for grammar\*

On top of which, as Smith noted, “masters are always and every where in a sort of tacit, but constant anduniform combination.” In a world in which economic necessity couples with employer collusion, workers have little choice: “Such combinations [by employers], however, are frequently resisted by a contrary defensive combination of the workmen; who sometimes too, without any provocation of this kind, combine of their own accord to raise the price of their labour.” 51 For this reason Smith thought it was wrong to treat trade unions as criminal conspiracies.52 The view of unions and strikes as defensive, aimed at lessening employers’ ability to take advantage of workers’ need, persisted throughout the industrial age. By the time L.T. Hobhouse wrote Liberalism, it was possible for a liberal to argue that **strikes might even be connected to human freedom:** The emancipation of **trade unions,** however, extending over the period from 1824 to 1906, and perhaps not yet complete, **was in the main a liberating movement, because combination was [are] necessary to place the workman on something approaching terms of equality with the employer, and because tacit combinations of employers could never, in fact, be prevented by law.**53 We must note, however, that nearly all of these arguments remain within a form of social theory that attempts to make capitalist practice more like its theoretical self-image. These thinkers tended to defend unions and their right to strike as a way of achieving “real freedom of contract” in the face of economic necessity. Hobhouse was updating Smith and Mill when arguing that “in **the matter of contract true freedom postulates substantial equality between the parties. In proportion as one party is in a position of vantage, he is able to dictate his terms. In proportion as the other party is in a weak position, he [and] must accept unfavourable terms.”** 54 On this account, the right to strike is defensible only insofar as it helps maintain a position of relative equality among independent bargaining parties. It thereby secures contracts that are not just voluntary but truly free—Mill’s “necessary instrumentality of that free market.” This basic idea reappears in any number of twentieth-century acts of labor legislation and jurisprudence, perhaps most notably in the 1935 law granting American workers the right to strike.55

#### The right to strike via unions corrects this power imbalance by ensuring an opportunity for organization and collective bargaining.

Bowie states: [Norman E., professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota “Business Ethics: A Kantian Perspective” Wiley Blackwell.<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-063121173X.html>] LADI rct st

Although I emphasize meaningful work as a means to gain respect and grow as a human being by exercising one’s talents, Ciulla reminds me that there is much in the work environment that undermines negative freedom (freedom from coercion), and that the decision to work itself requires a giving up of freedom in some respects. This latter point does not overly concern me because all choice forecloses other choices. Moreover, **having a job provides income, and income expands choices because it opens up possibilities. This is especially true when one has an adequate wage**, and that is why I have emphasized the role that **an adequate wage plays in meaningful work.** Of course, Ciulla is well aware of all this and in her analysis she points out that **for the unskilled their range of options is extremely limited, that the demise of unions has given much more power to manage- ment**, and that **there is a correlation between higher-paying jobs and the amount of freedom one has.** All these points are well taken. I especially agree with Ciulla that **unions provide a means for enhancing employee freedom.** In this case I practiced what I now preach. I am a former president of the AAUP union at the University of Delaware. I also point out that the United States is the most anti-union country in the G-20. **Unionization is considered a human right by the United Nations.** Obviously **unions provide an opportunity for participation,** and I think Ciulla and I agree that **participation schemes are one way to limit coercion.** In response to trends over the past twenty years, in this edition of Business Ethics: A Kantian Perspective I pay more attention to adequate pay for the middle class, issues of inequality, and economic mobility. However, none of this requires a revision in my original account of meaningful work.

#### Thus, I urge you to cast an affirmative ballot. Allowing workers to strike gives them the power to resist against workplace injustices and has employers respect their freedoms.

## 3

#### 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.

#### 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

## 4

#### Unions and collective bargaining increasce wages

**McNicholas et al. 20** [[Celine McNicholas](https://www.epi.org/people/celine-mcnicholas/), [Lynn Rhinehart](https://www.epi.org/people/lynn-rhinehart/), [Margaret Poydock](https://www.epi.org/people/margaret-poydock/), [Heidi Shierholz](https://www.epi.org/people/heidi-shierholz/), and [Daniel Perez](https://www.epi.org/people/daniel-perez/), 8-25-2020, "Why unions are good for workers—especially in a crisis like COVID-19: 12 policies that would boost worker rights, safety, and wages," Economic Policy Institute, <https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/>] //DDPT

On average, a worker covered by a union contract earns 11.2% more in wages than a peer with similar education, occupation, and experience in a nonunionized workplace in the same industry; this wage advantage is known as the “union wage premium.”[16](https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/#_note16) And unions don’t just help union workers—they help all of us. When union density is high, nonunion workers benefit, because unions effectively set broader standards—including higher wages, as noted by Rosenfeld, Denice, and Laird (2016)—that nonunion employers must meet in order to attract and retain the workers they need (and to avoid facing a union organizing drive themselves). The combination of the direct effect of unions on union members and this “spillover” effect to nonunion workers means unions are crucial in raising wages for working people and reducing income inequality. Research shows that deunionization accounts for a sizable share of the growth in inequality between typical (median) workers and workers at the high end of the wage distribution in recent decades—on the order of 13–20% for women and 33–37% for men.[17](https://www.epi.org/publication/why-unions-are-good-for-workers-especially-in-a-crisis-like-covid-19-12-policies-that-would-boost-worker-rights-safety-and-wages/#_note17)

#### – Wages increase destroy consumer spending AND create economic value

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/18/business/coronavirus-minimum-wage-increase.html>, KR

**Two new studies show that giving pay raises to low-wage workers is good for consumers, too**. That finding could add momentum to efforts to help grocery store clerks, nursing home workers and delivery drivers who are being paid a minimum wage despite their efforts being so essential during the current pandemic. The new research shows that **raising the minimum wage improves workers’ productivity, which translates into businesses offering higher-quality service. Because many customers are willing to pay more when quality improves, a company can raise its prices without losing sales volume. That means that profits need not suffer even though employee salaries increase.**

Moreover, **because companies are getting better performance from workers in return for paying them more, a higher minimum wage does not necessarily lead to fewer jobs. With a more productive work force, more economic value is being created and there is more money to go around**, so a higher paycheck for one person does not imply another person’s loss.

The federal minimum wage of $7.25 an hour has not increased since 2009, though Democrats in the House of Representatives have tried to raise it. State and local governments can set their own minimum wage, provided that it is above the federal rate. For example, Ohio’s minimum wage is $8.70 an hour and New York state’s is $11.80. San Francisco’s is $15.59 an hour.

The two new studies, one focused on nursing homes and the other on department stores, looked at the effects of minimum wage changes made at various levels of government. While they are both still working papers and have not appeared in scholarly journals, they were conducted rigorously, by my estimation, and the evidence they offer deserves consideration in the debate on the minimum wage, particularly during our current health and economic crises.

The nursing home study, by the economist Krista Ruffini, a visiting scholar at the Minnesota Federal Reserve, has direct implications in the current pandemic. The improvements in quality it found may be a very a big deal: They imply fewer medical complications and, perhaps, a longer life for patients.

Ms. Ruffini analyzed hundreds of increases in the minimum wage across the United States from 1990 to 2017. In each case, she compared employment in neighboring counties that suddenly had different minimum wage levels.

Her method expands on a landmark study by David Card, an economist at the University of California, Berkeley, and Alan Krueger, the former presidential adviser and Princeton economist, who found no drop in fast-food employment when New Jersey raised its minimum wage in 1992 above the level paid across the state line in Pennsylvania.

Similarly, Ms. Ruffini found little change in employment levels in nursing homes. Many employees were paid the minimum wage or somewhat more than that. Even in cases of the workers — nursing assistants — who had been paid more than the minimum wage, an increase in that base wage rippled through the labor market and still raised their salaries.

Rivian edges closer to an I.P.O., seeking a valuation above $50 billion.

PG&E says it faces a federal inquiry and $1.15 billion in losses over the Dixie fire.

The Biden administration will publish vaccine mandate rules ‘in the coming days.’

Ms. Ruffini’s most startling finding was that higher minimum wages reduced mortality significantly among nursing home residents. Her research suggests that if every county increased its minimum wage by 10 percent, there could be 15,000 fewer deaths in nursing homes each year, or about a 3 percent reduction.

How did pay increases translate into better patient health and longer lives? It appears that with better pay, jobs in nursing homes became more attractive, so employee turnover decreased. Patients benefited from more continuity in their care.

In addition, **the better paid employees may have simply worked harder, perhaps because they cared more about holding onto their jobs. Economists say they have been paid an “efficiency wage”: Employees become more productive when their wages are higher.**

The higher wage may also have **attracted more skilled or industrious people to the job,** but this seems to account for at most a small portion of the improvements in patient health.

#### Higher Productivity leads to better firm results which helps the economy.

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.

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