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

Plan inclusive counterplans don’t negate, I defend the resolution as a general principle to be followed so it tolerates exceptions to the general principle

#### I value morality due to the resolution’s use of ought, which is defined as a moral obligation

**Merriam webster strike:**

**:**a work stoppage by a body of workers to enforce compliance with demands made on an employer

**:**a temporary stoppage of activities in protest against an act or condition

#### Unconditional means preventing from adding additional exceptions to international law.

Chow and Schoenbaum 17 [Daniel Chow and Thomas Schoenbaum; 2017; Professor Chow served as a law clerk to the Honorable Constance Baker Motley, chief judge for the Southern District of New York, following graduation from law school, and then became an associate with Debevoise and Plimpton in New York. He came to Ohio State in 1985 and teaches International Law, International Transactions, Jurisprudence, Asian Law, and Property. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, Thomas J. Schoenbaum is presently the Harold S. Shefelman Professor of Law at the University of Washington in Seattle. He received his Juris Doctor degree from the University of Michigan and his PhD degree from Gonville and Caius College, University of Cambridge (UK). He is also Research Professor of Law at George Washington University in Washington DC. He is a practicing lawyer, admitted in several U.S. states and before the Bar of the Supreme Court of the United States. He has been a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and was Associate Dean at Tulane University in New Orleans, “International Trade Law: Problems, Cases, and Materials,” Aspen Casebook Study] Justin

1. Belgian Family Allowances helped to establish two basic principles of GATT jurisprudence: MFN applies to internal measures (in this case the 7.5 percent levy), and the same treatment extended to France and others (foregoing of the levy) must be extended unconditionally to all other WTO members. The unconditional extension of MFN must occur even if Norway or Denmark did not have a system of family allowances. While Belgian Family Allowances interprets the unconditional extension of MFN to mean without any conditions, it is also possible to interpret this requirement to prohibit any additional conditions beyond what is required of the original recipient of the benefit or privilege. See Matsushita, Schoenbaum, Mavroidis and Hahn The World Trade Organization: Law, Practice and Policy 167-177 (3d ed. 2015).

**The value criterion is minimizing oppression, defined as promoting the material conditions necessary for inclusion.**

**Oppression is created by social systems so only a focus on material conditions can solve.  
Johnson** Allan Johnson (PhD in sociology, he joined the sociology department at Wesleyan University) <http://www.cabrillo.edu/~lroberts/AlanJohnsonWhatCanWeDO001.pdf>. RW

Privilege is a feature of social systems, not individuals. People have or don't have privilege depending on the system they're in and the social categories other people put them in. To say, then, that I have race privilege says less about me personally than it does about [how] the society we all live in and how it is organized to assign privilege on the basis of a socially defined set of racial categories that change historically and often overlap. The challenge facing me as an individual has more to do with how I participate in society as a recipient of race privilege and how those choices oppose or support the system itself. In dealing with the problem of privilege, we have to get used to being surrounded by paradox. Very often those who have privilege don't know it, for example, which is a key aspect of privilege. Also paradoxical is the fact that privilege doesn't necessarily lead to a "good life," which can prompt people in privileged groups to deny resentfully that they even have it. But privilege doesn't equate with being happy. It involves having what others don't have and the struggle to hang on to it at their expense, neither of which is a recipe for joy,personal fulfillment, or spiritual contentment.... To be an effective part of the solution, we have to realize that privilege and oppression are not a thing of the past. It's happening right now. It isn't just a collection of wounds inflicted long ago that now need to be healed. The wounding goes on as I write these words and as you read them, and unless people work to change the system that promotes it, personal healing by itself cannot be the answer. Healing wounds is no more a solution to the oppression that causes the wounding than military hospitals are a solution to war. Healing is a necessary process, but it isn't enough.... Since privilege is rooted primarily in systems—such as families, schools, and workplaces—change isn't simply *a* matter of changing people. People, of course, will have to change in order for systems to change, but the most important point is that changing people isn't enough. The solution also has to include entire systems, such as capitalism, whose paths of least resistance [that] shape how we feel, think, and behave as individuals, how we see ourselves and one another.

### Contention – Class Domination

**The right to strike is the right to resist oppression – it allows workers to check the unilateral nature of the bargaining process**

**Lim ’19:** Woojin Lim. “The Right to Strike”. December 11th, 2019. The Harvard Crimson. <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/11/lim-right-to-strike/>. FD

On April 9, 1969, roughly 500 student activists [took over](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/04/event-commemorating-1969-harvard-strike-to-include-current-student-activists/) University Hall to protest Harvard’s role in the Vietnam War. City and state police armed with riot gear, clubs, and mace were [called](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/1994/4/22/police-raided-university-hall-pithe-following/) to remove all protesters who had vowed nonviolent resistance. In the early morning hours of April 10, over 400 police officers [stormed](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/5/27/university-hall-1969/) University Hall, between 250 and 300 arrests were made, and 75 students were injured. In response, by April 11, thousands of Harvard students, teaching fellows, and faculty had gathered in Harvard Stadium to strike. Fifty years later, the Harvard Graduate Students Union-United Automobile Workers [declared](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/12/3/grad-union-strikes/) a strike, fighting [for](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2019/11/21/grad-student-strike-proposals/) increased compensation, health benefits, and neutral third-party arbitration for sexual harassment and discrimination. On December 3, over 500 demonstrators, wearing on their shoulders large blue-and-white “UAW on Strike” placards, [marched](https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2019/12/unionized-harvard-students-go-on-strike/) routes throughout the Yard. In the strike of 1969, strikers fought for social justice; in the HGSU-UAW strike of 2019, strikers press on the fight for fair wages and working conditions. The right to strike is a [right](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression) to resist oppression. The strike (and the credible threat of a strike) is an indispensable part of the collective bargaining procedure. Collective bargaining (or “agreement-making”) provides workers and employees with the opportunity to influence the establishment of workplace rules that govern a large portion of their lives. The concerted withdrawal of labor allows workers to promote and defend their unprotected economic and social interests from employers’ unilateral decisions, and provide employers with pressure and incentives to make reasonable concessions. Functionally, strikes provide workers with the bargaining power to drive fair and meaningful negotiations, offsetting the inherent inequalities of bargaining power in the employer-employee relationship.

**Striking is a human right and is only invoked when one’s right is endanger – it’s key to resisting the worst aspects of neoliberalism**

**Ewing ’10:** Keith Ewing. “Yes, Striking is a Human Right”. The Guardian. March 26th, 2010. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/mar/26/ba-strike-human-rights>. FD.

It begins with the International Labour Organisation's [convention on the right to organise and bargain collectively](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freedom_of_Association_and_Protection_of_the_Right_to_Organise_Convention,_1948) of 1948, which a British Labour government was the first to ratify; followed by the [Council of Europe's social charter](http://www.coe.int/T/DGHL/Monitoring/SocialCharter/) of 1961, which a British Tory government was the first to ratify; followed, in turn, by the UN's [international covenant on economic, social and cultural rights](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm) of 1966. The British government has been told by the international human rights community that it must relax the existing legal restrictions and stop treating a lawful strike as a breach (rather than a suspension) of the worker's contract of employment. If our law met our international obligations, it would not be possible for [bully boy Willie Walsh](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2010/mar/25/ba-strike-letter-academics-walsh) unilaterally to [withdraw the travel perks](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/transport/7526928/BA-chief-Willie-Walsh-says-loss-of-strikers-travel-perks-not-negotiable.html)of BA crew, as announced this week. But more than that – international law requires us to allow workers and their unions to take solidarity and sympathy action to help fellow workers in dispute. It is, after all, one of the purposes of joining a union – mutual aid in times of need, though not in Britain. Just as Walsh is allowed to engage in [secondary action](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2010/mar/25/ba-strike-letter-academics-walsh) by using other companies to carry his passengers, so (says the international human rights community) the union should have the right to call on other unions to put real economic pressure on BA by refusing to handle its planes. Labour, of course, is paralysed by its neoliberal love of the free market, which it places above its weak commitment to the rule of law. But help may be at hand. The European court of human rights has recently ruled that the right to freedom of association in article 11 of that treaty must include the right to strike, and has suggested that the scope and content of that right must reflect as a minimum the standards set by the ILO. This opens the possibility of British unions recovering from the Strasbourg court the rights lost in the political process. So let us say it loudly, and let us say it clearly: the right to strike is a human right; **it should be better protected than it** is; and the British government should take steps now to comply with its international obligations. The exercise of the right to strike is the mark of free society, where discord is accepted as normal, and conflict regarded as healthy. The real question we should be asking is not why do people strike, but why they do not do so more often? To respond by saying that workers are all happy bunnies compared with their forebears would not be the right answer. Strikes may be inconvenient and they may be frustrating. So is the exercise of other human rights. But if you don't want strikes, it is up to you to provide a better answer to the problem of the bully employer who can tear up contracts and impose unilateral changes to working conditions knowing that workers have no option but to accept, and no meaningful legal redress in the courts. In the meantime, where is the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and where is the rest of the human rights brigade ([Liberty](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/) and [Justice](http://www.justice.org.uk/enterb/index1.html))? It's about time you [put your weight behind workers](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2010/mar/26/ba-strikers-deserve-public-support) who exercise their human rights, and do so against the ugly background of the rightwing press in full spate.

freedoms over property rights.

**Class domination results in oppression and causes poverty – this impact has uniqueness**

**Gourevitch ’12:** Alex Gourevitch. “A Radical Defense of the Right to Strike”. Jacobin. July 12th, 2018. <https://jacobinmag.com/2018/07/right-to-strike-freedom-civil-liberties-oppression>. FD.

[Class-based oppression](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/03/working-class-capitalism-socialists-strike-power/) is inextricable from liberal capitalism. While meaningful variation exists across capitalist societies, one of the fundamental unifying facts is this: the majority of able-bodied people are forced to work for members of a relatively small group, who dominate control over productive assets and who, thereby, enjoy control over the activities and products of those workers. There are [workers](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/07/turning-to-the-working-class), and then there are owners and their managers. Workers are pushed into the labor market because they have no reasonable alternative to looking for a job. They cannot produce the goods they need for themselves, nor can they rely on the charity of others, nor can they count on adequate state benefits. Depending on how we measure income and wealth, about 60 to 80 percent of Americans [fall into this category](https://thenewpress.com/books/after-new-economy) for most of their adult lives. This structural compulsion is not symmetric. A significant minority of the population has enough wealth — whether inherited or accumulated or both — that they can avoid entering the labor market. They might happen to work, but they are not forced to do so. The oppression, then, stems not from the fact that some are forced to work. After all, if socially necessary work were shared equally, then it might be fair to force each to do their share. The oppression stems from the fact that the forcing is unequal —that only some are made to work for others, producing whatever employers pay them to produce. This structural inequality feeds into a second, interpersonal dimension of oppression. Workers are forced to join workplaces typically characterized by large swathes of uncontrolled managerial power and authority. This oppression is interpersonal because it is power that specific individuals (employers and their managers) have to get other specific individuals (employees) to do what they want. We can distinguish between three overlapping forms that this interpersonal, workplace oppression takes: subordination, delegation, and dependence. Subordination: Employers have what are sometimes called “[managerial prerogatives](https://books.google.com/books/about/Managerial_Prerogative_and_the_Question.html?id=NQLEBAAAQBAJ)” — legislative and judicial grants of authority to owners and their managers to make decisions about investment, hiring and firing, plant location, work process, and the like. Managers may change working speeds and assigned tasks, the hours of work, or, as Amazon currently does, force employees to spend up to an hour going through security lines after work [without paying them](https://www.oyez.org/cases/2014/13-433). They can fire workers for [Facebook comments](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/10/17/facebook-firings_n_1003789.html), [their sexual orientation](https://www.sgvtribune.com/2011/10/08/fired-gay-water-polo-coach-and-supporters-protest-at-charter-oak-board-meeting/), [for being too sexually appealing](http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2013/07/29/borgata_babes_lawsuit_new_legal_cases_assess_discrimination_based_on_sex.html), or for not being appealing enough. They can [give](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/71431/the-big-squeeze-by-steven-greenhouse/9781400096527/) workers more tasks than can be performed in the allotted time, lock employees in the workplace overnight, [require employees to labor](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/money_co/2011/09/amazon-warehouse-employees-overheated-ahead-of-holiday-season.html) in extreme heat and [other physically hazardous conditions](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/31/us/osha-emphasizes-safety-health-risks-fester.html), or [punitively isolate](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/caring-on-stolen-time-a-nursing-home-diary) workers from other coworkers. They can [pressure](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/03/labor-law-corporations-workers-political-influence)employees to take unwanted political action, or, in the case of nurses, force employees to [work for twenty-two different doctors](https://socialistworker.org/2018/07/03/nurses-are-set-to-strike-uvm). What unifies these seemingly disparate examples is that, in all cases, managers [are exercising](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/06/private-government-interview-elizabeth-anderson) legally permitted prerogatives. The law does not require that workers have any formal say in how those powers are exercised. In fact, in nearly every liberal capitalist country (including social democracies like Sweden), employees are defined, in law, as “subordinates.” This is subordination in the strict sense: workers are subject to the will of the employer. Delegation: There are additional discretionary legal powers that managers enjoy not by legal statute or precedent but because workers have delegated these powers in the contract. For instance, workers might sign a contract [that allows managers to require employees](https://www.aclu.org/issues/criminal-law-reform/drug-testing?redirect=workplace-drug-testing) to submit to random drug testing or unannounced searches. In the United States, 18 percent of current employees and 37 percent of workers in their lifetime [work under noncompete agreements](http://equitablegrowth.org/why-its-time-to-rethink-non-compete-agreements/). These clauses give managers the legal power to forbid employees from working for competitors, in some cases reducing these workers to near indentured service. The [contract](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/04/verizon-wireless-strike-bernie-sanders-cwa/) that the Communications Workers of America had with Verizon until 2015 included a right for managers to force employers to perform from ten to fifteen hours of overtime per week and to take some other day instead of Saturday as an off-day. While workers have granted these prerogatives to employers voluntarily, in many cases it’s only technically voluntary because of the compulsion to work. This is especially true if workers can only find jobs in sectors where these kinds of contracts proliferate. Which leads to the third face of oppression: the distributive effects of class inequality. The normal workings of liberal capitalism elevate a relatively small group of owners and highly paid managers to the pinnacle of society, where they accumulate most of the wealth and income. Meanwhile, most workers do not earn enough to both meet their needs and to save such that they can employ themselves or start their own businesses. The few that do rise displace others or take the structurally limited number of opportunities available. The rest remain workers. Dependence: Finally, managers might have the material power to force employees to submit to commands or even to accept violations of their rights because of the worker’s dependence on the employer. A [headline example](https://jacobinmag.com/2018/06/heres-how-much-money-americas-biggest-corporations-have-stolen-from-their-own-workers) is [wage theft](https://www.epi.org/blog/wage-theft-by-employers-is-costing-u-s-workers-billions-of-dollars-a-year/), which affects [American workers](https://www.nelp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/WinningWageJusticeSummaryofResearchonWageTheft.pdf) to the tune of $8 to $14 billion per year. Employers [regularly break](http://www.jwj.org/free-and-fair-how-labor-law-fails-u-s-democratic-election-standards) labor law, by disciplining, threatening, or firing workers who wish to organize, strike, or otherwise exercise supposedly protected labor rights. In other cases, workers have been [refused bathroom breaks](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/livesontheline/) and resorted to wearing diapers, [denied legally required lunch breaks](https://www.sfgate.com/business/article/Employers-must-pay-if-they-deny-lunch-breaks-2474407.php)or [pressured to work through them](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/08/14/indiana-att-technicians-class-action-lawsuit-lunch-breaks_n_1777166.html), [forced to keep working](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/08/business/media/ads-for-mcdonalds-and-las-vegas-aimed-at-harried-workers.html) after their shift, or denied the right to read or turn on air conditioning during break. In [particularly egregious examples](https://www.buzzfeed.com/jessicagarrison/the-new-american-slavery-invited-to-the-us-foreign-workers-f#.nmJN7Yg27), employers have forced their workers to stay home rather than go out on weekends or to switch churches and alter religious practices on pain of being fired and deported. There are also the many cases of systematic [sexual harassment](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2018/03/metoo-workplace-discrimination-sexual-harassment-feminism), in those wide regions of the economy where something more than a public shaming is needed to control bosses. In all these instances, employers are not exercising legal powers to command. Instead they are taking advantage of the material power that comes with threatening to fire or otherwise discipline workers. This material power to get workers to do things that employers want is in part a function of the class structure of society, both in the broad sense of workers being unequally dependent on owners, and in the narrower sense of workers being legally subordinate to employers. The oppression lies not just in the existence of these powers, nor in some capitalist bad apples, but in how these powers are typically used. Managers tend to use these powers “rationally,” to exploit workers and extract profits. Each of these different faces of oppression — structural, interpersonal, and distributive — is a distinct injustice. Together they form the interrelated and mutually reinforcing elements of class domination that are typical of capitalist societies. Defenders of liberal capitalism insist that it provides the fairest way of distributing work and the rewards of social production. They often speak in the idiom of freedom. Yet liberal capitalism fundamentally constrains workers’ liberty, generating the exploitation of one class by another. It is this oppression that explains why workers have a right to strike and why that right is best understood as a right to resist oppression.

#### Poverty is the worst form of structural violence and kills as many people as a nuclear war

Abu Jamal ’98: Abu-Jamal, prominent social activist and author, ’98, [A Quiet and Deadly Violence, Sept 19, <http://www.flashpoints.net/mQuietDeadlyViolence.html>]. FD.

The deadliest form of violence is poverty. --Ghandi It has often been observed that America is a truly violent nation, as shown by the thousands of cases of social and communal violence that occurs daily in the nation. Every year, some 20,000 people are killed by others, and additional 20,000 folks kill themselves. Add to this the nonlethal violence that Americans daily inflict on each other, and we begin to see the tracings of a nation immersed in a fever of violence. But, as remarkable, and harrowing as this level and degree of violence is, it is, by far, not the most violent features of living in the midst of the American empire. We live, equally immersed, and to a deeper degree, in a nation that condones and ignores wide-ranging "structural' violence, of a kind that destroys human life with a breathtaking ruthlessness. Former Massachusetts prison official and writer, Dr. James Gilligan observes; By "structural violence" I mean the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted by those who are above them. Those excess deaths (or at least a demonstrably large proportion of them) are a function of the class structure; and that structure is itself a product of society's collective human choices, concerning how to distribute the collective wealth of the society. These are not acts of God. I am contrasting "structural" with "behavioral violence" by which I mean the non-natural deaths and injuries that are caused by specific behavioral actions of individuals against individuals, such as the deaths we attribute to homicide, suicide, soldiers in warfare, capital punishment, and so on. --(Gilligan, J., MD, Violence: Reflections On a National Epidemic (New York: Vintage, 1996), 192.) This form of violence, not covered by any of the majoritarian, corporate, ruling-class protected media, is invisible to us and because of its invisibility, all the more insidious. How dangerous is it--really? Gilligan notes: [E]very fifteen years, on the average, as many people die because of relative poverty as would be killed in a nuclear war that caused 232 million deaths; and every single year, two to three times as many people die from poverty throughout the world as were killed by the Nazi genocide of the Jews over a six-year period. This is, in effect, the equivalent of an ongoing, unending, in fact accelerating, thermonuclear war, or genocide on the weak and poor every year of every decade, throughout the world. [Gilligan, p. 196] Worse still, in a thoroughly capitalist society, much of that violence bec[omes]ame internalized, turned back on the Self, because, in a society based on the priority of wealth, those who own nothing are taught to loathe themselves, as if something is inherently wrong with themselves, instead of the social order that promotes this self-loathing. This intense self-hatred was often manifested in familial violence as when the husband beats the wife, the wife smacks the son, and the kids fight each other.

### Contention – Democracy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Independently, our coordinated civic engagement is key to comprehensive climate action globally.

Fisher and Nasrin 20 [Dana R; Professor of Sociology and the Director of the Program for Society and the Environment at the University of Maryland. Her research focuses on questions related to democracy, activism, and environmentalism — most recently studying climate activism, protests, and the American Resistance. Her research employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates data collected through open-ended semi-structured interviews and participant observation with various forms of survey data; Sohana; University of Maryland, College Park, UMD, UMCP, University of Maryland College Park · Philip Merrill College of Journalism Master of Arts; “Climate activism and its effects,” Wiley Interdisciplinary Review; October 2020; https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345455893\_Climate\_activism\_and\_its\_effects]

As coordinated school strikes have taken place around the world to draw attention to the climate crisis, they have mobi-lized an increasing number of participants in a growing number of locations. This type of activism involves particularforms of civic engagement that specifically aim to and pressures governments to take action that addresses the issue of cli-mate change. Civic engagement is the term used to describe the manifold ways that citizens participate in their societieswith the intention of influencing communities, politics, and the economy. Forms of engagement range from tactics thatinvolve citizens working directly to change their individual behaviors, along with those that involve indirect efforts tobring about change through the political and economic systems (like school strikes). Tactics run the gamut and rangefrom those that work within these systems to those that work outside of them (Meyer & Tarrow, 1997). Collectiveefforts are mediated by various organizational forms (Anheier & Themudo, 2002), which can either create or remove obstacles to participation (Fisher & Green, 2004; for more general discussion, see Gamson, 1975; McAdam, 1983). Ashas been noted by numerous studies, civic engagement is much higher in democratic countries where citizens areafforded rights to participate and to voice their opinions (DeBardeleben & Pammett, 2009; see also Putnam, Leonardi, &Nanetti, 1994; Schofer & Longhofer, 2011; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999; de Tocqueville, 2002; see particularly Verba,Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). At the same time, digital technologies have been found to facilitate the spread of variousforms of activism while they connect countries and cultures (Bennett, 2013; Theocharis, Vitoratou, & Sajuria, 2017)

This paper reviews the specific ways that citizens have engaged civically around the issue of climate change, paying particular attention to the documented effects of these efforts on climate change itself. Our discussion provides a review of the range of direct and indirect forms of climate activism (for a general overview of the direct and indirect effects of social movements, see Snow & Soule, 2010). After this review, we present the case of school strikes as a specific tactic that has gained attention in recent years. In this section, we review the limited research that presents data collected from participants of climate strikes in 2019 to understand trends in the expansion of this popular tactic. As the world responds to the COVID-19 outbreak and activism (including climate strikes) move increasingly online, we discuss the potential implications of the pandemic on climate activism and engagement. The conclusion of this paper emphasizes that future research must pay more attention to the relationship between climate-related civic engagement and measurable environmental outcomes. It highlights the methodological challenges facing scholars who take on the difficult analytical task of assessing the outcomes of climate activism in a way that is scalable for a global movement aiming to stop a global crisis. 2 | ACTIVISM WITH DIRECT EFFECTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE There are limited forms of civic engagement that involve efforts to have a direct effect on individual greenhouse gas emissions. For example, some environmental movements and environmental groups encourage their members to make lifestyle changes that reduce their individual carbon footprints. These efforts focus on changing consumer behaviors, such as reducing car-use, flying, shifting to nonfossil fuel-based sources of electricity, and eating less dairy or meat (Büchs, Saunders, Wallbridge, Smith, & Bardsley, 2015; Cherry, 2006; Cronin, McCarthy, & Collins, 2014; Ergas, 2010; Haenfler, Johnson, & Jones, 2012; Middlemiss, 2011; Salt & Layzell, 1985; Saunders, Büchs, Papafragkou, Wallbridge, & Smith, 2014; Stuart, Thomas, Donaghue, & Russell, 2013; Wynes, Nicholas, Zhao, & Donner, 2018; for an overview on these measures, see Wynes & Nicholas, 2017). So far, there are only a limited number of case studies that measure the direct effect of participation in these types of movements as it relates to climate outcomes. In their study of the electricity use of 72 households in southern England, for example, Saunders and colleagues find an association between low levels of electricity use and contact with environmental organizations (Saunders et al., 2014). Similarly, in a longitudinal ethnographic study of a small number of participants in an environmental campaign in Sweden, Vestergren and colleagues conclude that participants in an environmental campaign sustained reductions in plastic use and meat consumption over the period of their study (Vestergren, Drury, & Chiriac, 2018, 2019). There is a clear need for research on the material outcomes of these movements that aim to have direct effects on consumption patterns that goes beyond single case studies. At the same time, measuring direct effects of these efforts in a way that scales up is extremely challenging, especially when crossing cultural and institutional contexts. 3 | ACTIVISM WITH INDIRECT EFFECTS ON CLIMATE CHANGE Most types of activism, however, do not aim to have direct effects on greenhouse gas emissions. Instead, they work to pressure economic and political actors to change policies and behaviors in a way that will lead to reductions in emissions. In other words, their goals are indirect: these forms of engagement target nodes of power—policymakers, regulators, and businesses—to change their behaviors and/or accelerate their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. These forms of civic engagement involve providing the labor and political will needed to pressure political and economic actors to enact the kinds of emission-reducing policies recommended by scientists working with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change & Edenhofer, 2014, pt. IV). Much of the research in this area looks at the role of internationally focused environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which tend to target international environmental negotiation processes (Betsill & Corell, 2008; Boli & Thomas, 1999; Fox & Brown, 1998). Within this research area, there are numerous studies that analyze 2 of 11 FISHER AND NASRIN quantitative data sets to understand the relationship between NGOs and a country's environmental impact comparatively (see also Frank, Hironaka, & Schofer, 2000; Grant, Jorgenson, & Longhofer, 2018; Jorgenson, Dick, & Shandra, 2011; Longhofer & Jorgenson, 2017; Schofer & Hironaka, 2005). Other studies focus specifically on the relationship between NGOs and environmental impact within nations (Dietz, Frank, Whitley, Kelly, & Kelly, 2015; Grant & Vasi, 2017; Shwom, 2011). In their quantitative analysis of the effects of world society on environmental protection outcomes in countries around the world, Schofer and Hironaka find clear evidence that the rise of an “international environmental regime,” which includes environmental NGOs, is associated with lower levels of environmental degradation, including reduced carbon dioxide emissions (Schofer & Hironaka, 2005). More recently, scholars have worked to understand this relationship within the context of development. For example, Longhofer and Jorgenson conclude that nations with the highest levels of membership in international environmental NGOs experience a moderate “decoupling” in the assocaition between economic development and carbon emissions (Grant et al., 2018; see also Jorgenson et al., 2011; Longhofer & Jorgenson, 2017) Although these studies provide a good first step in understanding this connection, more research is needed about how exactly the existence of NGOs bring about lower emissions. Beyond these studies that explicitly analyze the relationship between NGOs and carbon emissions, there is a small but growing literature that assesses the broader consequences of activism, which aims to pressure policymakers to take action across a range of issues (Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, & Su, 2010; Giugni, McAdam, & Tilly, 1999; Soule & Olzak, 2004). This research focuses specifically on the outcome of specific forms of engagement, or tactics (for an overview, see Caren, Ghoshal, & Ribas, 2011). Some of the most common tactics that activists are employing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions indirectly are summarized in the sections that follow. 3.1 | Activism through litigation Litigation is one of the tactics that citizens, local governments, NGOs, and even corporations are using to pressure governments. This tactic aims to work through the judicial system to take action or enforce existing legislation (McCormick et al., 2017; Peel & Lin, 2019; Peel & Osofsky, 2015; Setzer & Vanhala, 2019; see also Pfrommer et al., 2019). In May 2017, UN Environment reported that climate change-related cases had been filed in 24 countries plus the European Union (UN Environment, 2017). In some cases, this tactic is being used to pressure businesses and governments to meet their policy commitments (Setzer & Vanhala, 2019; UN Environment, 2017). So far, however, there remains insufficient evidence regarding what effect these judicial efforts are having on greenhouse gas emissions. 3.2 | Activism targeting business actors At the same time, some groups focus their attention on targeting the economic sector and specific businesses. These efforts employ shareholder activism and cooperative board stewardship, as well as protest (King & Soule, 2007; M.-D. P. Lee & Lounsbury, 2011; McDonnell, King, & Soule, 2015; Szulecki, 2018; Yildiz et al., 2015). Shareholder activism focuses on investors' response to corporate activities and performances (Gillan & Starks, 2007). It involves investors who are dissatisfied with the company's management or operation taking advantage of their role as shareholders to pressure the company to change (Bratton & Mccahery, 2015; Gillan & Starks, 2007). Cooperative board stewardship, in contrast, involves “jointly owned and democratically controlled businesses” that support renewable energy (Viardot, 2013, p. 757; see also Yildiz et al., 2015). Some of this business-focused activism involves working through transnational advocacy networks, which have been documented to target governments and corporations (Hadden & Jasny, 2017; Keck & Sikkink, 2014; McAteer & Pulver, 2009). In their comparative study of shareholder activism in the Amazon region, McAteer and Pulver come to mixed conclusions, finding that one of the shareholder advocacy networks in Ecuador was successful in limiting oil development, while the other was not (McAteer & Pulver, 2009). Other types of activism that target business practices involve environmental groups working as part of a campaign to pressure institutional investors and universities to divest from fossil fuels. Groups employ “a range of strategies to shame, pressure, facilitate, and encourage investors in general, and large institutional investors in particular, to relinquish their holdings of fossil fuel stocks in favour of climate-friendly alternatives” (Ayling & Gunningham, 2017, p. 131; Franta, 2017; Grady-Benson & Sarathy, 2016; Hestres & Hopke, 2019). Although research has yet to conclude FISHER AND NASRIN 3 of 11 that these efforts have a substantial effect on fossil fuel funding or greenhouse gas emissions (Tollefson, 2015; but see Bergman, 2018), a recent study of fossil fuel divestment and green bonds provides some evidence of success. In it, Glomsrød and Wei model green investment scenarios that include funding allocation constraints due to divestment around the world. The authors find that these efforts yield notable emissions reductions (Glomsrød & Wei, 2018, p. 7). 3.3 | Activism working within the political system Activism also frequently involves citizens working individually or in groups to take advantage of opportunities to pressure governmental actors from within the political system. These tactics involve lobbying elected officials or working to change political representation through democratic elections of candidates (for an overview, see Clemens, 1997; Schlozman, Verba, & Brady, 2012). Turning first to lobbying, there is some evidence that these efforts by civic groups have a positive effect on environmental outcomes. In their 2016 study, Olzak and colleagues find that the number of environmental lobbyist organizations has a positive effect on the enactment of environmental legislation (Olzak, Soule, Coddou, & Muñoz, 2016). Although the authors do not specifically document the effects of the legislation on material outcomes, more recent research has found climate laws to reduce carbon emissions (Eskander & Fankhauser, 2020). Even though groups representing both the general public and businesses engage in lobbying, research has found business groups have (and spend) more financial and human resources, which affords them “privileged access” to policymakers and policymaking (Freudenburg, 2005). In his study of the “climate lobby,” Brulle compares the amounts spent by different groups for lobbying around the climate issue in the U.S. Congress. He finds that the “major sectors involved in lobbying were fossil fuel and transportation corporations, utilities, and affiliated trade associations. Expenditures by these sectors dwarf those of environmental organizations and renewable energy corporations” (Brulle, 2018, p. 289; see also Farrell, 2016). In some cases, representatives from business interests that have been lobbying against environmental policies are given opportunities to join the government. This process leads to “Regulatory Capture” by the specific business interest and is found to be associated with substantial negative public and environmental health consequences (for a recent example, see Dillon et al., 2018). Activism within the political system also involves citizens working through the electoral process to affect all sorts of social change (for a discussion of engagement in electoral politics as activism, see Fisher, 2012, 2019a). In some cases, elections focus on the differences between candidates who are supportive of policies that include more aggressive climate change mitigation strategies. Although research has yet to analyze extensively the relationship between this type of election-related civic engagement and climate outcomes, there is already some evidence. For example, a 2019 study finds that individuals in the United States who installed solar panels participate more in elections (Mildenberger, Howe, & Miljanich, 2019). At the same time, other research has documented various forms of electoral backlash against climate policies, both individually (Stokes, 2016, 2020), as well as in combination with other progressive agenda items (Muradian & Pascual, 2020). In their study of the success of “far-right movements” around the world and the concurrent election of “far-right” candidates, Muradian and Pascual note that far-right-leaning elected officials tend to have low concern for environmental issues and to deny climate change and disregard scientific evidence (Muradian & Pascual, 2020). Although they do not specifically look at the environmental outcomes of these officials holding office, given their common values and the empirical evidence coming out of the early years of the Trump Administration (Bomberg, 2017; Fisher & Jorgenson, 2019), it is likely that these officials will contribute to the passage of policies that limit the effectiveness of climate-related plans, reduce enforcement of these plans, or block them outright. 3.4 | Activism outside the economic and political system At the same time, there is expansive research on the ways citizens with less access to resources and power participate by challenging the economic and political system from outside it (for an overview, see Meyer & Tarrow, 1997). These efforts include a range of more confrontational tactics, such as boycotting, striking, protesting, and direct action that target politics, policymakers, and businesses. Many studies have explained this type of activism using climate change as a case (Fisher, 2010; Hadden, 2015; Saunders, Grasso, Olcese, Rainsford, & Rootes, 2012; Swim, Geiger, & Lengieza, 2019; Wahlström, Wennerhag, & Rootes, 2013; see also Fisher, Stanley, Berman, & Neff, 2005; Walgrave, 4 of 11 FISHER AND NASRIN Wouters, Van Laer, Verhulst, & Ketelaars, 2012). So far, however, only a handful of studies have explored the effect of these tactics on climate-related outcomes (but see Muñoz, Olzak, & Soule, 2018; Olzak et al., 2016). In their research on the success of environmental legislation in the U.S. Congress, Olzak and colleagues find that some civic tactics have a more positive effect than others: while they conclude that the number of environmental lobbyist organizations is positively associated with the enactment of environmental legislation, which can lead to carbon emissions reductions, they also find that protest by constituents has no effect (Olzak et al., 2016; see also Olzak & Soule, 2009). In a 2018 piece, which uses more recent data to analyze the relationship between protest, policy, and greenhouse gas emissions across states in the United States, the authors come to different conclusions. They find that emissions in states decline when there is more pro-environmental protest (Muñoz et al., 2018).

A good deal of research has concluded that activism, including tactics such as protests or strikes played a large role in pressuring governments to create environmental laws and environmental agencies tasked with enforcing those laws around the world (Brulle, 2000; see also Longhofer, Schofer, Miric, & Frank, 2016; McCloskey, 1991; Rucht, 1999; Schreurs, 1997; Steinhardt & Wu, 2016; Wong, 2018). Moreover, research has documented how coalitions of activists achieved a degree of success when they protested environmentally damaging projects, including the Narmada Dam development in India (Khagram, 2004), and environmentally harmful nuclear power plants, dams, and airports in Japan (Aldrich, 2010). In her study of the campaign against coal mining and burning in South Africa, Cock finds that the campaign challenged inequality and generated solidarity (Cock, 2019).

4 | CLIMATE STRIKES AS A GROWING TACTIC

Climate strikes are a particular outsider tactic that aims to pressure both the political and economic system. On August 20, 2018, Greta Thunberg decided not to attend school and sit on the steps of the Swedish parliament to demand that the government take steps to address climate change (Gessen, 2018). Inspired by the national school walkout against gun violence in the United States that was organized after the Parkland School Shooting in Florida, the 15-year-old has spent her Fridays sitting with a hand-written sign protesting ever since. Fridays for Future—the name of the group coordinating this tactic of skipping school on Fridays to protest inaction on climate change—flourished due to its usage of digital technologies to engage young people and the tactic has spread.

In March 2019, the first global climate strike took place, turning out more than 1 million people around the world. Six months later in September 2019, young people and adults responded to a call by young activists to participate in climate strikes as part of the “Global Week for Future” surrounding the UN Climate Action Summit.1 The number of participants in this event globally jumped to an estimated 7.6 million people (Rosane, 2019). Figure 1 presents the growth in the tactic of climate strikes in terms of the numbers of nations where strikes have taken place and the total number of participants involved.

Even before this movement had mobilized millions to strike, a narrative synthesis of studies that focused on youth perceptions of climate change from 1993 to 2018 documented how youth voices on climate change had become much more prominent and more widely publicized (K. Lee, Gjersoe, O'Neill, & Barnett, 2020). Specific research on this movement and its consequences has yet to be published in peer-reviewed publications (but see Evensen, 2019; Fisher, 2019b; Wahlström et al., 2013). However, in a series of pieces published in the Washington Post, Fisher presents analyses of data collected from participants in climate strikes during 2019 to understand how this tactic and the movement have grown in the United States (Fisher, 2019c, 2019d).

As an striking is an outsider tactic by school-aged children that aims to pressure governments to implement more radical climate policies that will lead to emissions reductions, school strikes are a popular example of activism with the goal of having an indirect effect on climate change. Measuring the outcomes of these efforts, in terms of political outcomes and emissions reductions is extremely challenging given the indirect nature of this activism. Such calculations are made even more challenging given the scale and scope of the activism, which has mobilized millions of people to act locally to pressure governments at the local, national, and international levels. Although the overall numbers are large, most of these strikes involve relatively small proportions of overall populations.

#### Climate change is a major threat to marginalized communities and causes extinction.

Specktor 19 [Brandon; writes about the science of everyday life for Live Science, and previously for Reader's Digest magazine, where he served as an editor for five years; "Human Civilization Will Crumble by 2050 If We Don't Stop Climate Change Now, New Paper Claims," livescience, 6/4/19; <https://www.livescience.com/65633-climate-change-dooms-humans-by-2050.html>]

The current climate crisis, they say, is larger and more complex than any humans have ever dealt with before. General climate models — like the one that the [United Nations' Panel on Climate Change](https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/) (IPCC) used in 2018 to predict that a global temperature increase of 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (2 degrees Celsius) could put hundreds of millions of people at risk — fail to account for the **sheer complexity of Earth's many interlinked geological processes**; as such, they fail to adequately predict the scale of the potential consequences. The truth, the authors wrote, is probably far worse than any models can fathom. How the world ends What might an accurate worst-case picture of the planet's climate-addled future actually look like, then? The authors provide one particularly grim scenario that begins with world governments "politely ignoring" the advice of scientists and the will of the public to decarbonize the economy (finding alternative energy sources), resulting in a global temperature increase 5.4 F (3 C) by the year 2050. At this point, the world's ice sheets vanish; brutal droughts kill many of the trees in the [Amazon rainforest](https://www.livescience.com/57266-amazon-river.html) (removing one of the world's largest carbon offsets); and the planet plunges into a feedback loop of ever-hotter, ever-deadlier conditions. "Thirty-five percent of the global land area, and **55 percent of the global population, are subject to more than 20 days a year of** [**lethal heat conditions**](https://www.livescience.com/55129-how-heat-waves-kill-so-quickly.html), beyond the threshold of human survivability," the authors hypothesized. Meanwhile, droughts, floods and wildfires regularly ravage the land. Nearly **one-third of the world's land surface turns to desert**. Entire **ecosystems collapse**, beginning with the **planet's coral reefs**, the **rainforest and the Arctic ice sheets.** The world's tropics are hit hardest by these new climate extremes, destroying the region's agriculture and turning more than 1 billion people into refugees. This mass movement of refugees — coupled with [shrinking coastlines](https://www.livescience.com/51990-sea-level-rise-unknowns.html) and severe drops in food and water availability — begin to **stress the fabric of the world's largest nations**, including the United States. Armed conflicts over resources, perhaps culminating in [making] **nuclear war, are likely**. The result, according to the new paper, is "outright chaos" and perhaps "the end of human global civilization as we know it."

### Contention-Public workers strikes

#### Public workers aren’t allowed to strike now

**Murphy 21** (Matt, Senior political columnist at a variety of companies/”Public Employees Press Right-To-Strike Legislation”/July 14, 2021/Accessed 11-1-21/

<https://amp.wbur.org/news/2021/07/14/massachusetts-public-employee-strike-bill>)(SPHS, SO)

Two of the leading progressive Democrats in the House joined with union officials, teachers and other public employees on Tuesday to push for the repeal of a state law that bans public sector workers from going on strike. Rep. Mike Connolly and Rep. Erika Uyterhoeven testified to the Joint Committee on Labor about legislation they filed that would lift the ban on work stoppages for all public employees, including teachers, police and firefighters. Uyterhoeven, of Somerville, called the withholding of labor a "fundamental human right," and Connolly, of Cambridge, said strikes, or even the threat of going on strike, are an "indispensable part of the collective bargaining process." **Supporters of the bill (H 1946), which has five co-sponsors, said 11 or 12 other states have eliminated their bans on public employee work stoppages. While the law against public employee strikes was meant to guard against the disruption of critical services, Connolly said the COVID-19 pandemic has proven that many workers in the private sector with the right to strike also perform indispensable roles in communities. "It's not fair to turn to a public educator or a firefighter and say to that worker they shouldn't be afforded the same fundamental rights in the workplace as all workers," Connolly said. Dozens of labor leaders, teachers and other union workers turned up to testify remotely in support of the bill on Tuesday at a hearing focused on employee rights and benefits. State law stipulates that "no public employee or employee organization shall engage in a strike, and no public employee or employee organization shall induce, encourage or condone any strike, work stoppage, slowdown or withholding of services by such public employees."**Massachusetts Teachers Association President Merrie Najimy said repealing that law would "provide equilibrium and fairness to our collective bargaining process.""With the onset of COVID, health and safety of educators, students and families is an unfortunate and an additional reason we must have the right to strike," Najimy said. During the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers in Andover were determined by the Commonwealth Employee Relations Board to have gone on an illegal strike when they refused to enter the school building for professional development ahead of the start of the 2020 school year. Instead, the teachers set up with laptops in the parking lot of the school to protest what they considered to be poor and unsafe ventilation in the school and attempted to participate in the training from outside. Gov. Charlie Baker at the time said he supported the decision to force teachers to return to work inside the school building, and Najimy said the episode highlighted the importance of the Connolly-Uyterhoeven bill. "Last year in too many districts educators and students were compelled to put their health, safety, and, yes, even their lives on the line by being forced to return to their schools in spite of poor ventilation and other safety concerns," Najimy said. "This was something that was never expected. They had no recourse." Many who testified noted the gains made by workers over centuries through the use of strikes, including the famous "Bread and Roses" strike by women and immigrant workers at a textile mill in Lawrence. Others said that teachers in other states have been able to use work stoppages to win concessions for students in their contracts, such as more green spaces. Sen. Becca Rausch, a Needham Democrat, testified in support of allowing teachers to strike, but offered up her own bill as a potential compromise.Rausch's bill would amend state law to allow public sector workers to strike under what she described as "limited circumstances," including a failure by management to bargain in good faith, and it would not apply to police, fire protection employees or jail, prison or other correctional facility workers.

#### Public unions with strike power are a way to combat workplace inequities

#### Myall 19 (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. /“Right to strike would level the playing field for public workers, with benefits for all of us”/April 17, 2019/Accesed: 11-1-21/<https://www.mecep.org/blog/right-to-strike-would-level-the-playing-field-for-public-workers-with-benefits-for-all-of-us/> )(SPHS,SO)

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.[i**] All of us have a stake in the success of collective bargaining. **But a union without the right to strike loses much of its negotiating power. The right to withdraw your labor is the foundation of collective worker action. When state employees or teachers are sitting across the negotiating table from their employers, how much leverage do they really have when they can be made to work without a contract? It’s like negotiating the price of a car when the salesman knows you’re going to have to buy it — whatever the final price is. Research confirms that public-sector unions are less effective without the right to strike**. Public employees with a right to strike earn between 2 percent and 5 percent more than those without it.[ii] While that’s a meaningful increase for those workers, it also should assuage any fears that a right to strike would lead to excessive pay increases or employees abusing their new right. LD 900, “An Act to Expand the Rights of Public Employees Under the Maine Labor Laws,” ensures that Maine’s public-sector workers will have the same collective bargaining rights as other employees in Maine. The bill would strengthen the ability of Maine’s public-sector workers to negotiate, resulting in higher wagers, a more level playing field, and a fairer economy for all of us.

#### Public workers are uniquely key — they’re the most effective at creating social change because they often fight for the people they serve as well as themeslves

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**Beckett 18** (Ben Beckett is a union steward in New York City and a member of New York City DSA./“Public Sector Workers Should Have the Right to Strike”/08/18/Accessed: 11-01-21 /<https://jacobinmag.com/2018/08/taylor-law-strike-nixon-public-sector>) (SPHS,SO)

New York gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon released her labor platform last week. It contains support for a safe-staffing law, a perennial demand of nurses unions that mandates nurse-to-patient ratios that are high enough to ensure nurses aren’t run ragged and patient safety is strong, as well as provisions for increased safety and apprenticeship programs in the building trades —a group of workers Nixon previously upset with remarks suggesting they would have to take pay cuts to help lower the cost of subway construction. Arguably more important are the broader, more ambitious, and more difficult proposals: support for universal just-cause protections, which would shield all workers from arbitrary firings and discipline (standard in union contracts), and a $15 minimum wage across the whole state, not just the New York City metropolitan area. Especially important, though, is Nixon’s call to establish the legal right to strike for public sector workers in New York state. While New York is legally favorable to worker organizing in many ways, it has some of the most draconian anti-public sector labor laws in the country, most of which are compiled in the Public Employees Fair Employment Act, commonly known as the Taylor Law or the Taylor Act. **Public sector worker strikes have been critical in raising class consciousness in the United States, both in 2018 and historically. They can reveal the anti-working-class outlook of the Democratic Party — and even some union officials. Even if the law doesn’t change any time soon, simply raising the issue, as Nixon has, could raise the level of worker militancy in New York and around the country.** The Left should make public sector right-to-strike laws the next “litmus test” for progressive candidates, similar to current demands like supporting Medicare for All and rejecting corporate campaign donations. Kale Chips and Pinkertons The media and the Right immediately seized on Nixon’s right to strike proposal. “That would be really bad for all New Yorkers, especially poor New Yorkers. The more you depend on public services, the more you’ll have at risk if public employees are allowed to strike,” E.J. McMahon, of the anti-union Empire Center For Public Policy told the New York Daily News. No one should be surprised that anti-union hacks would pit elements of the working class against each other. But it was more surprising to watch union-endorsed Democrats like Andrew Cuomo and Bill de Blasio publicly declare their opposition to Nixon’s proposal. “I don’t agree with changing the Taylor Law. The Taylor Law serves an important public purpose and at the same time there are lots of ways for workers’ rights to be acknowledged and their voices to be heard. I think we have the right law now,” the New York City mayor said. Even more disturbing was watching union officials attack Nixon for saying their members should have the right to strike. Civil Service Employee Association president Danny Donohue said, “It is incredibly naïve for Cynthia Nixon to propose that all public sector workers be able to strike. Clearly, she does not have the experience needed to be governor of New York.” CSEA represents more than 300,000 New York state workers and local government workers outside New York City. John Samuelsen, the international president of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), went even further, entering the realm of self-parody by telling the Chief-Leader, “I am extremely skeptical of her newfound support of striking. I believe that she will cut and run when we shut the subway down. As soon as her hipster Williamsburg supporters can’t take public transit to non-union Wegman’s to buy their kale chips, she will call in the National Guard and the Pinkertons.” Samuelsen’s statement was especially out of touch (and not just because there are no Wegmans grocery stores in New York City). TWU’s largest local, which represents transit-system workers in New York City, faced severe penalties under the Taylor Law as a result of the union’s 2005 strike. The union as a whole and individual workers faced heavy fines; the union was forbidden from collecting dues by automatic checkoff for six months, and local president Roger Touissant was sentenced to prison. As recently as 2011, TWU issued press releases declaring New York’s blanket ban on public sector strikes a human-rights violation. One struggles to find a motivation for Samuelsen’s acerbic comments toward Nixon for suggesting the state do away with the ban, other than shortsighted support for Governor Cuomo’s reelection. Ironically, the ban on public sector strikes makes this sort of calculation rational, if craven. Most unions would not dream of cozying up to the boss this way. But with public sector workers denied some of the most powerful tools other workers have, being on the boss’s good side is seen by many union leaders as the easiest way to settle a contract. A Demand Worth Making **After decades with very few strikes in the public sector, 2018 has seen public school teacher strikes in Arizona, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and West Virginia, all states where it is illegal for public workers to strike.** Teachers also struck in Colorado, where public workers may legally strike. And in California, where public strikes are also legal, 24,000 University of California workers represented by AFSCME 3299 recently went on strike. **The other two major public sector strikes of the last two decades were the Chicago Teachers Union strike in 2011 — legal — and the New York City Metropolitan Transit Authority strike of 2005 — illegal, with severe consequences for the union.** Public sector workers have shown a recent willingness to go on strike even when it’s illegal. So why should the Left make legalizing public strikes a core demand? **First, by pushing candidates to back this demand, the Left can isolate them from the Democratic establishment, who make up a large portion of bosses in the public sector and are therefore unlikely to support giving their workers the right to strike. We saw this theory play out in real time last week. Cynthia Nixon and Julia Salazar, who is running for New York State Senate, have made this plank a central demand and have shown a willingness to confront the party’s centrist leadership. But by pushing candidates to make the legalization of public sector strikes a central part of their labor platform, the Left can force more candidates to develop power from the grassroots to make up for whatever funding and other means of support they lose from the party. Second, the prohibition on strikes contributes to the sad state of many public sector unions — especially in New York.** There are many reasons for the decline of militancy and workplace organizing in public sector unions, and many of those factors are beyond unions’ control. But if job action is off the table, one of the few ways public sector unions can defend their interests is to make political deals with officeholders. Such unions are then put in a position where they are afraid to anger the boss, the incumbent politician, by supporting challengers who often advocate more pro-worker policies. Again, we saw this dynamic play out with Samuelsen’s and Donohue’s comments, as well as less colorful comments to the same effect by other union officials. Because their unions are in such precarious positions, these leaders are terrified to get on Cuomo’s bad side. A union that’s afraid to piss off the employer is already fighting with both hands behind its back. By raising this issue, the Left create a clarifying situation where union officials are forced to explain to their members why they support politicians who want to deny them rights. In New York, this situation is exacerbated by the Triborough Amendment, a provision in the Taylor Law mandating that when public sector collective-bargaining agreements expire without a new contract settled, the terms of the previous contract continue. This disincentivizes both sides from conducting difficult and potentially unpopular negotiations and gives union officials little incentive to organize their membership during a contract campaign. This, in part, explains officials like Donohue’s hostility to the idea of giving their members the right to strike. If members could conduct a strike without severe legal repercussions, union officials might have to organize one — or be exposed as unable to do so. However, the Triborough Amendment also gives workers the protections of a union contract during bargaining impasses and prevents the boss from unilaterally dictating new terms. In New York and states with similar provisions, we should be clear that we are demanding the right to strike in addition to and not in lieu of the Triborough Amendment. Even if there is little hope of changing the law in the short term, simply seeing politicians and the media raise the issue may give workers more confidence to break the law and strike anyway. Ultimately what makes a strike successful is not the degree to which it follows the law. Much more important is workers’ enthusiasm, unity, and confidence in their actions. And there is evidence that political campaigns can make a real difference. When Public Workers Strike Politicians have plenty to fear from striking public workers. The public sector remains a comparative bastion of union strength, with unions representing about 38 percent of public sector workers nationwide, compared to about 7 percent of workers in the private sector. In New York state, about 72 percent of public sector workers are in unions, versus 15 percent in the private sector. This year alone, in Arizona, Oklahoma, and West Virginia, striking teachers won major concessions from hostile, right-wing state governments. Reactionary politicians and capitalists from Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker to the forces behind the Janus case understand the potential power of public unions to advance progressive causes — that is precisely why they have attacked them so viciously. **Public sector workers *occupy a strategic place in the labor market because so many of their jobs are critical to society’s functioning.* That means *the potential power of withdrawing their labor is magnified beyond their immediate job site*. The recent teachers’ strikes were so effective because school closures forced thousands of parents to significantly alter their routines. The New York City transit strike of 2005 lasted only three days, but because it made transportation across the city extremely difficult, it was estimated to cost the city and businesses hundreds of millions of dollars in lost fares and revenue. And while conditions vary, public sector strikes generally have a lot of public support. One reason for that is from nurses to teachers to welfare workers, better conditions for the people they serve are often among public workers’ core demands. Even when strikes are not linked directly to social demands, a majority of Americans do not support weakening public sector unions.** However, for unions, a comparison between the West Virginia teachers’ strike and the New York City transit strike is instructive. West Virginia teachers organized parents and community members for months ahead of the strike. They tied their working conditions to children’s learning conditions, making clear how their demands would benefit virtually everyone. Transit workers did not make such arguments, and support for their strike was nowhere near as high as that of the teachers. **Public sector unions have to make clear that when they walk off the job, *they are striking to benefit the people they serve as much as themselves*. When schools are closed, when buses don’t run, when trash goes uncollected and mail undelivered, it affects not just the employer, but nearly everyone. The pressure on government bosses to settle is therefore extremely high. And when public sector workers strike, *they have the power to win transformative victories.*** From both elected officials’ and union heads’ reaction to Nixon’s right-to-strike proposal, we can see that neither side wants to face this prospect. We should make them.