

# 16 reasons to work UNION!

## **Union Benefit #1: All workers win when unions win**

Think of all the things we take for granted: The minimum wage. A ban on child labor. Unemployment insurance. OSHA – the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Workers compensation. Social Security. Medicare. Reliable public services. Overtime pay. Equal pay for equal work. Family and medical leave. The list goes on. All these improvements exist because union workers organized, mobilized, and fought to turn these ideas into reality.

## **Union Benefit #2: Safety**

Because unions pushed to create OSHA, U.S. workers are less likely to die, get injured, or contract debilitating illnesses on the job than we were a generation ago. With the added protection of a union contract, we have safety training and safety equipment in place. And we have the ability to raise alerts and correct unsafe working conditions.

## **Union Benefit #3: Equal pay for equal work**

Union jobs eliminate the pay gap for women. None of this 78 cents for every \$1 a man makes. In fact, it's even better than that: Women in union jobs actually make more than men in nonunion jobs. You're right "we can do it" – because we've done it.

## **Union Benefit #4: Equality**

Working union means higher pay and respect on the job – especially for people of color. African-American and Hispanic workers make hundreds of dollars a week more in union jobs than they do in nonunion jobs. But better wages is only part of the story – because unions play key roles in fighting for opportunity, prosperity, and basic human dignity for all workers.

## **Union Benefit #5: The 8-hour day, the weekend, and more**

Union members fought and died to create the 8-hour day – and overtime pay for when we work longer than that. Union members created the weekend. As union members, we believe workers have a right to a decent living without working from sunup to sundown. We believe we have the right to have lives outside of work.

## **Union Benefit #6: A better retirement**

Union members believe that if we work hard and play by the rules, we should be able to:

- Earn wages we can thrive on
- Provide a better life for our kids
- Retire in dignity, not poverty

The truth is, unions deliver when we work and when we retire. Example: Union retirees are more likely to have paid health benefits and a real pension. That means we don't have to rely a risky 401(k) that relies on the roulette wheel of Wall Street.

## **Union Benefit #7: Reducing income inequality**

The average Fortune 500 CEO now makes more money in 6 hours than the average worker makes all year. But it wasn't always like this, and it doesn't have to stay like this. When unions are strong, we make sure workers get a bigger share of the wealth we help create. We also make sure the wealthy don't get as many tax breaks.

## **Union Benefit #8: Better health insurance**

Union members are more likely to have health insurance – and dental care, and vision care, and prescription drug coverage. We're not only more likely to have insurance, we're more likely to pay less out of pocket for that insurance. Combined with union wage advantages, that means union families come out ahead to the tune of \$12,300 each year.

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## **Union Benefit #9: A voice on the job**

When we're part of a union at work, we don't surrender our rights the minute we clock in or log on. That's because unions bring democracy to the workplace. The boss doesn't have all the power – we've got power, too. Playing favorites is no longer part of the equation. A union contract means the boss has to negotiate with us, and treat us equally and fairly.

## **Union Benefit #10: The middle class**

The facts since World War II prove it: When unions are strong, the middle class grows. But when unions shrink, the middle class shrinks. Instead, it is income inequality that grows – because, without unions, there's no one to stop the top 1 Percent from grabbing all the wealth workers create.

## **Union Benefit #11: Better lives for all workers**

In Minnesota, unions are leading the fight to raise the minimum wage, to provide earned sick pay, to provide paid parental leave, to guarantee better scheduling, and to fight wage theft by employers who don't pay workers what they've already earned. Instead of a race to the bottom, we believe in a race to the top: We believe all workers should enjoy more of the same benefits that we enjoy.

## **Union Benefit #12: Pay equity**

Unions believe in equal pay for equal work. But, in Minnesota, it goes beyond that. We've made it possible so women also receive equal pay when they work in a job of equal value. That's another way unions are reducing the gender pay gap.

## **Union Benefit #13: Better pay**

Union jobs pay an average of \$202 a week more than nonunion jobs. That's like getting a pay raise of \$5 an hour – or \$10,500 a year. That's an incredible return on our investment in union dues. Plus, we raise the wage level for workers across the board. That's why workers in states with full collective-bargaining rights make \$1,500 a year more than workers in so-called "right to work" states.

## **Union Benefit #14: A higher quality of life for all of us**

Higher wages are not the only way unions raise the standards of opportunity and prosperity for everybody. States with higher union membership rates and full collective-bargaining rights also have higher levels of education, higher voter participation, better social safety nets, and fewer tax giveaways to the rich and giant corporations.

## **Union Benefit #15: Bread and Roses**

With a union, there's more to life than working. We can have good jobs that pay well – and have the good life that those good jobs support. Working union means more time off for family, friends, and life. Union workers are more likely to have paid vacation (and more of it), paid holidays (and more of them), paid sick days (and more of them), paid personal leave, paid funeral leave, paid military leave, and on and on.

## **Union Benefit #16: We're not alone**

Without a union, the boss can discipline you (or fire you) for any reason – or no reason at all. Legally, you're an "at will" employee. But with a union, it's different: We've got protection. Before imposing discipline, the boss needs to prove "just cause." We can fight the discipline. We can force the boss to follow "due process."

In the end, it's all about upholding this basic principle: We deserve to be treated fairly, and with respect. A union guarantees that happens.