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August 2011 Edition

Local 1440



Decline in Unions A Leading Factor in Income Inequality

With union members under attack across the country, a new study shows how important unions are to the economy. The study, "Union Decline Accounts for Much of the Rise in Wage Inequality," published in the August issue of the ["American Sociological Review."](#) says the decline in the percentage of workers who belong to unions is worsening income inequality and closely parallels the decline of the middle-class.

In fact, the decline of union membership explains about a fifth of the increase in wage inequality among women and about a third among men, says Bruce Western, a professor of sociology at Harvard University and co-author of the study. According to Western:

Our study underscores the role of unions as an equalizing force in the labor market.

Even nonunion workers benefit from stronger unions as employers raise wages and increase employee benefits, says co-author Jake Rosenfeld, a professor of sociology at the University of Washington:

For generations, unions have been the core institution advocating for more equitable wage distribution. Today, when unions—at least in the private sector—have largely disappeared, that means that this voice for equity has faded dramatically. People now have very different ideas about what's acceptable in terms of pay distribution.

Since the union membership began to decline in the 1970s, the link between worker productivity and wages has been cut, causing employees to work harder for less and less money. Between 1980 and 2008, nationwide worker productivity grew by 75 percent, while workers' inflation-adjusted average wages increased by only 22.6 percent, the study says.

By James Parks, AFL-CIO

One Member, One Vote

USW democracy begins at home, in more than 1,800 local unions throughout Canada, the United States and the Caribbean. Membership is open to all without discrimination.

Steelworkers are men and women of every ethnic background from cities and towns in every region of our countries, workers who join together in local unions to bargain a better deal - more job security, a healthier and safer place to work, better benefits, and an end to arbitrary, unfair treatment.

Union officers at every level are responsible to the membership. And the principle of "one member, one vote" applies whether we're electing our local officers, deciding our goals and priorities in contract negotiations, choosing delegates to help establish the USW's overall policy at our triennial international convention, or voting for the international, national and district officers who make up our executive board and direct the Union's day-to-day work.

USW collective bargaining agreements set the pattern for hundreds of thousands of workers in dozens of industries. Union contracts do more than raise wages and deliver an array of benefits such as pensions, health care and vacations. They also secure equal treatment on the job and provide an established procedure for resolving differences with supervisors and management — a grievance procedure that resolves disputes on their merits, not on favoritism.

Trained professional staff provides our districts and local unions with expertise in research, economics and public policy, legal services, health and safety, and communications. Equally important, thousands of USW members are trained every year by our Union in these and other skills.

This is Our Union, an organization fighting to improve our wages, benefits and working conditions; to ensure justice and dignity on the job; and to create a social movement to better the lives of all working people.

International President Leo W. Gerard

opened the 2011 USW Convention by acknowledging past leaders, recognizing the work of our union forefathers and calling current members to stand and fight for workers' rights and preserve the middle class.

"The union movement and our allies need to mount a major assault for workers," Gerard told the 3,000 delegates and international guests assembled at the MGM conference center in Las Vegas Monday. This, he said, is the response to the assaults on workers that have occurred relentlessly in the past three years.



"Corporate executives won't give up living like kings without a fight. So, let's give them a fight," Gerard challenged the delegates. The delegates responded to this kind of sentiment with applause 20 times and with three standing ovations.

Steelworkers must stand up and fight for good jobs, decent wages, workers' rights to organize and strike without fear of scabs taking their jobs, Gerard said. They must stand up and fight for universal health care, a national manufacturing strategy and restoration of global leadership in manufacturing.

"There's no guarantee we'll win. The only thing that's guaranteed is the end of the labor movement – unless we fight," Gerard told the crowd, invoking the theme of the 2011 convention: Stand up, fight back!

Gerard walked the crowd through the tragic events of the past three years. Unregulated, reckless gambling on Wall Street crashed the U.S. economy, which knocked down the world economy. Unemployment skyrocketed. Housing values declined dramatically for the first time in history. Unprecedented numbers of foreclosures continue to take homes from working people. Wages stagnated and income inequality rose to pre-Great Depression levels in the United States and Canada.

Instead of aiding suffering working people, politicians demanded austerity and immediately-balanced budgets. They fought health care reform, opposed extension of unemployment benefits, tried to destroy social safety nets including Social Security and Medicare, Gerard noted. At the same time, he said, politicians refused to balance budgets by taxing the rich and ending corporate loopholes and subsidies.

Politicians are not working for working people anymore, he said: "They're working for the corporate billionaires who lavish their campaigns with cash."

Workers cannot depend on politicians, he said. They must fight for themselves, Gerard said, quoting Samuel Adams, signer of the Declaration of Independence:

"It does not take a majority to prevail, but rather an irate, tireless minority keen on setting brush fires of freedom in the minds of men."

"That's what we've got to do for our members," Gerard told the delegates. "That's what we've got to do for our economies, for our pursuit of universal health care, for the preservation of our pensions, for our families, our countries."

"We need to set brushfires of real freedom in the minds of our members."

Gerard noted that by sticking together and standing strong, Steelworkers have achieved awesome advancements in bargaining in these dire times, including winning successorship and coordinated bargaining in paper and substantial wage increases at Potash Corp. in Saskatchewan. The union preserved retiree benefits, the likes of which no other union has ever achieved. Steelworkers also, he noted, have pursued and won important trade cases protecting 56,000 member jobs over the past three years.

Steelworkers have shown they can win when they stand together. And now, Gerard said, they must stand and fight for their rights.

"We can only win the future if we fight for it!" Gerard said, and added:

"We know from years of bargaining that you can't win a better deal without fighting for strong demands. So sisters and brothers, be strong."

"Stand up and fight back – harder than ever."



**NEW PAY RATE
STARTING 7/31/2011**

Grade 1 - \$19.720 Grade 4 - \$24.947
Grade 2 - \$21.574 Grade 5 - \$26.485
Grade 3 - \$23.714

Local 1440 and 2571

UNION HALL NUMBERS
432-7396

		ext.
Mark Valdez	President	303
Marty Perez	V.P./Wage-Rate	310
Linda Doppe	F.S./Benefits	302
Buzz Enea Jr	Chairman/Rel.	300
Steve Berendsen	Tin Grievance	306
Steph DeLaRosa	M & I Griev	308
Mike Orlando	Rolling Griev	305
Joe Perez	Sheet Griev	307
Kevin Nicholas	USP Griev	312
Andy Angelo	Contracting Out	309
Nick Garcia	Drug & Alcohol	311

Your Wage Safety Representative's

Bill Halgas 439-6388
Bob Bedoya 430-6486
Tim Lear 439-6535
John Passur 439-6144

Grievance Committee

Buzz Enea Jr.	Chairman -Reliability
Mike Orlando	Rolling
Joe Perez	Sheet
Steve Berendsen	Tin
Stephanie De La Rosa	M&I

Contracting Out

Andy Angelo. -	Chairman
Jim Gillespie -	Assistant

ICD

Learning Advocates

Andy Angelo	Hamid Heydari
Milt Lea	Tim Lear
Jeanne Millecam	Bill Swenson
Bill Soltis	David Hall
Fernando Blanco	Javier Lopez

The C.A.A. Office Hours

Monday	Closed
Tuesday	Closed
Wednesday	7:00 to 11:00 am.
Thursday	12:30 to 4:30 pm.
Friday	12:30 to 4:30 pm.

Signed contributions are invited by Members of Local 1440. Other contributions may be accepted. All material is subject to general interest to the membership and space availability, and may not be returned. Articles, opinions expressed, and statements made are not necessarily the opinion or the policy of the Union. The union does not endorse any advertisers

Have You Been Sworn In Yet?

**Our Union Meetings are held every
2nd Thursday of the month
Our Next Meeting will be on
September 8th
5:30 PM at the Union Hall
677 Cumberland Street
Pittsburg, CA**



**Respirator
Classroom
Training**

Wednesday August 31
7-9 am

Safety Training Center

To sign up call Jessica at 6189

Is this on your JQR?

Refer to 2011 Safety Training Calendar for Details.



**Respirator
Fit Test***

S & S Storage Trailer (next to EMT station)
September 6 & 16
8am-3pm

E-mail or call to schedule, Julie Chase x6088

**Note: Employees must be current on both Respirator Training and Respirator Medical Surveillance to be fit tested. Plus, employees must be clean shaven enough to create a seal with the respirator.*

*The Drug & Alcohol Committee
of Local 1440
wishes to share the
12 Steps of Recovery*

8th Step

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. (thought about those we have harmed)

In the previous step, we began to make peace with our higher power and with ourselves. In the eight step we begin the process of making peace with others.

Steps eight and nine are concerned with personal relations;

First, we take a look backward and try to discover where we have been at fault.

Second, we make a vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done; and

Third, having thus cleansed away the debris of the past, we consider how, with our new found knowledge of ourselves, we may develop the best possible relation with every human being we know.

Contacts:

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Mark C.

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“We want a better America, an America that will give its citizens, first of all, a higher and higher standard of living so that no child will cry for food in the midst of plenty”

SOURCE: Sidney Hillman



California LABOR Federation

ART PULASKI, Executive Secretary-Treasurer

CONNIE LEYVA, President

www.CaliforniaLabor.org

Important update on Paycheck Deception ballot initiative

Union leaders,

We've been closely monitoring a new ballot initiative proposal that would severely limit our unions' ability to collect donations from our members for political purposes. This initiative, which is currently collecting signatures to qualify for the June 2012 ballot, is even more dangerous than previous "paycheck deception" initiatives we've defeated in the past. **It expressly prohibits workers -- both public and private sector -- from making voluntary political contributions through payroll deduction**, and creates a new set of rules that make it even more difficult for workers to fight corporate power and influence in politics.

Like Prop. 226 in 1998 and Prop. 75 in 2005, this new initiative targets unions in an effort to silence the voices of our members in politics. Our opposition has learned from their past mistakes, and tightened the current initiative to make it less vulnerable to our counter arguments.

The proponents, primarily wealthy Orange County Republican activists, have raised more than \$1 million so far. There's no doubt the threat is real.

Proponents are framing the new initiative as an attack on special interests in politics. In effect, this measure would only impact union members while allowing corporations to continue to spend freely to push their agenda. This is a potentially devastating measure that would **impact every union** in California.

The Federation is working closely with a coalition of unions to fight this initiative on several fronts. As the initiative has yet to qualify, efforts are under way to attempt to keep it off the ballot. However, we're also moving ahead with research and campaign planning in the event the initiative qualifies. We'll send regular updates on the campaign plan, including ways you can help.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Federation's political director, Bryan Blum, at 510-663-4069.

In solidarity,
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