





reason for unionization is that unions raise wages: not just for those in a union but also for those in related fields (Rowell). Unionized workers can earn up to 20 percent more than their non-unionized counterparts. Those that are not unionized but work in an industry with 25 percent unionization or more can expect to earn 5 percent more than those in less unionized areas (Rowell). These workers wanted to be fairly compensated for their labor and paid similarly to union warehouse workers in the area who have a starting pay of \$18 to 21 dollars an hour (Schreiber). If the union had succeeded and their pay increased there would have been little difference for shareholders or Bezos himself. But for the employees, it could have been the difference between housed, or homeless. Over the past 40 years, the top one percent have gained 70 percent of the economic growth in America but with a stronger union force, the runaway income could be constrained (Walter, Mishel). By increasing the union density by just one percent the percent share of a nation's net income for the bottom and middle class increases tremendously. A stronger middle class is important as they are the drivers of economic growth for a nation (Rowell). Supporting unions is the best way to create a stable and strong middle and working class.

Unions do not just increase wages. They also fight against discrimination. When an employee is not part of a union, they have no way of defending themselves against discrimination in the workplace. Often workers fear that if they go to H.R., they will face retaliation from their boss. But with the backing of a union people are better equipped to protect and defend themselves from discrimination. Unions often negotiate for things such as pay



warehouses have become modern “slaughterhouses”. A study done by the University of California showed that there was a 50% increase in the mortality rate for warehouse workers, line cooks, agricultural workers, and construction workers (Cory). Making these jobs some of the most dangerous during the pandemic. These people were all working-class and likely didn’t have benefits provided by their employers. If these people had the support of a union from the beginning their lives could have possibly been saved. According to the 2015 National Compensation Survey, “94 percent of union workers have access to retirement benefits, while only 65 percent of nonunion workers do. In addition, 85 percent of union workers can take paid sick leave, compared to 62 percent of those without union representation. And union workers in the United States are 28 percent more likely to have health insurance—and pay a lower share of premiums for it” (Walters). As someone who worked at Walmart during the 2020 pandemic, I have personally lost two of my coworkers to the COVID19 virus. Yet, many of my coworkers still come to work sick, and when asked why the answer boils down to the fact that they don’t have any paid time off or insurance and cannot afford to lose their job. Although this is purely anecdotal similar situations can be found across the country. These are the people that ensure that everyone is fed and safe. Most people can agree that their work is necessary, yet their lives are not treated as necessary. Without union support, these people will continue to suffer needlessly in the name of profits they will never see. It is no coincidence that union membership is correlated to higher life satisfaction (Rowell). By not having to stress about paying out of pocket for these things people are better enabled to spend their money on things that they enjoy leading to a prosperous economy (Rowell). The best way to achieve a happy and safe workforce is with unions defending workers from corporate greed.

The shot fired by the constable was not the first unjust death at McKees Rocks. The violence against the working class started the first time the company chose profits over lives. And that violence is still happening to this day. "Men are persecuted, robbed, and slaughtered, and their wives are abused in a manner worse than death -- all to obtain or retain positions that barely keep starvation from the door," said a local priest at McKees Rocks (De Leon). This observation was true back in 1909 and is still applicable to our modern workforce. If the sole purpose of a company is growth at any cost, then the sole purpose of a union is sustainability at the cost of growth. Unions act as a shield against the brutal and bloody hands of corporations. By standing in solidarity with labor union workers, the working class of the United States would receive better wages, reduce runoff income, reduce workplace discrimination, uplift black, and brown neighborhoods, create a better standard of living, and a happier workforce. If the United States of America is ever to become a place of prosperity and equality unions, will be at the forefront of that change.

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