

It has been said that the working people built America. These working people are your typical middle class citizens. Unions have helped in the past to protect middle class workers from being exploited by their employers. In the 1820's a union sought to reduce the working day from 12 hours to 10. They were successful and would later succeed in creating the 40 hour working week. Unions were also among the first to offer the middle class benefits. These benefits include, but are not limited to, paid health care and pensions. Throughout the course of history these same unions have helped to protect the middle class workers working conditions as well as their economic conditions. To this day unions are continuing to help the working citizens.

During the Great Depression unions helped to bring America back onto its feet. In 1935 the National Labor Relations Act granted workers the right to bargain collectively. They were encouraged to fight for their rights. The increase in union movement helped the middle class to survive the Great Depression. Now in the 2000's Unions are once again helping the middle class to survive.

With the recent economic recession unions are protecting workers and helping them to continue being employed. Those in unions can usually not be fired unless there is a just cause. Unions strive for the fair treatment of their workers and are willing to stand up for them. A 2008 study showed that those who work for a union on average earn 11.3% more than non-union workers. This is an equivalent to \$2.26 per hour more than those who do not work in a union. This money helps the middle class boost the economy. The majority of the population in the United States is a part of the middle class, and thus an important aspect of the economy.

A 2003 study has shown that union workers are on average more productive than non-union workers. This is partially due to the fact that unionized establishments often offer more formal training than non-unions. This helps the worker perform their job efficiently and safely. Many unions are affiliated with the ICD, Institute for Career Development. This allows for workers to further their

education. These middle class citizens are now more educated. Should something happen and these citizens were to lose their job, they are now more marketable and have improved their chances of finding employment once again.

Unions are a vital part in American society. Without the assistance of unions the middle class could have very easily fallen into poverty levels during the current recession. The unions are keeping the middle class working and thus help to stimulate the economy. Unions help the middle class to work in safe conditions. A number of unions provide ways for their workers to continue their education which helps the middle class workers to move ahead in life. Unions give benefits to workers that would otherwise be costly and difficult to obtain. Furthermore unions keep wages competitive and provide the middle class with a better quality of life.