

Unions are the foundation of the middle class, and the middle class is the foundation of society. The middle class is made secure by the formation of unions, which are defined as “an organization of workers joined to protect their common interests and improve their working conditions.” The success of a population is dependent upon the middle class because the middle class is the biggest part of society. If the largest part of society fails to thrive, society as a whole will deteriorate.

It is no wonder that the functionalism of the middle class is dependent upon the strength of unions. As part of a union, an employee is allotted a voice in regards to his or her employment. Without a union, the middle class would be set back hundreds of years to a time where seventeen hour workdays and unhealthy conditions were prominent among places of employment. These poor working conditions do not make for a comfortable and maintainable lifestyle, which seem to be the goals of the middle class.

Also, having a voice on the job provides a chance for the employee to bargain pay with his or her employer. Unions are the best way to ensure that companies are reasonable in providing for their employers. Employee bargaining is probably the reason that union workers earn approximately 30% more salary than their nonunion counterparts (aflcio.org). This type of bargaining allows employees and employers to maintain a strong line of communication.

Furthermore, union workers are more likely to enjoy employee benefits than workers who do not belong to a union. For example, most union workers enjoy a pension after retirement. With a pension, a worker will continue to receive payment long after he or she has retired. This enables an average worker a chance to retire at a relatively young age and maintain a comfortable lifestyle. Along with this lifestyle, union workers are also often provided with health insurance, which is essential to avoid massive healthcare costs

To provide an example of how a union positively effects it's member, my uncle was a member of a union throughout his thirty-two year employment. My uncle was provided with health benefits, good pay, and a pension that was a direct result of his union membership. Following his retirement in 2006 at the age of 58, my uncle enjoys a lifestyle that would not be possible had he not been a member of a union.

Without a union, a company may become too powerful. This will lead to the demolition of the middle class. For example, if the Chief Executive Officer of a company suddenly decides to cut wages in order to better fund his or her personal ventures, union workers can have a say. Unions are the best way to ensure that such an overtaking does not occur. This type of organized labor secures that the company will be a democracy rather than a dictatorship.

Unions make the middle class strong. A strong middle class leads to a strong society. Without this strong foundation, companies could partake in "big government," in which they can become corrupt and overtake employee rights. Unions are, without a doubt, the best way to maintain order and fairness within a workplace.

Works Cited

"Unions FAQs." *America's Union Movement*. Web. 8 May 2010.

<<http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/faq/>>.