

Throughout American history, the formation of unionized workers has proven to be the driving-force of the American middle-class. In 1954 when the United States started to experience an economic upturn, 35% of workers were unionized. Unfortunately, the current union situation is quite different from the 1950's. Currently, only 12.3% of the American workforce is unionized, and the middle-class is struggling to operate during an economic recession (Ahrens). The decline of unionized workers has decreased several benefits which empower the middle-class. If unions reform, causing increased wages and purchasing power, then the American middle-class will recover from the current economic recession.

Over the years since the formation of unions, numerous researchers and studies have confirmed specific economic impacts of American unions. Unions typically raise the wages of the employees that they represent, increase benefits of the employees, and enhance productivity of each worker in the economy as a whole (Voos). Even during the road to recession, the presence of unions can be found making positive impacts. Within the four-year period of 2004 to 2008, union workers were being paid on average 11.3% higher than non-union workers (Madland). Unfortunately for the middle-class, the amount of unionized workers has been gradually declining.

Along with the steady collapse of unions, there was another main contributor to the fall of the middle-class. During periods of high economic growth, workers' wages and workers' productivity were positively correlated. When productivity increased, the workers would benefit with higher wages. This relationship eventually became less significant from 1980 to 2008. During this economic boom, workers still continued to be highly productive, but they did not receive appropriate wage increases. From 1980 to

2008, worker productivity grew by 75%, while worker's wages only increased by 22.6% (Madland). This unjustified difference eventually caused the middle-class workers to be paid less, causing them to have less purchasing power in an over productive economy.

One way to boost a waning economy is by purchasing more goods. This purchasing causes more money to be circulated between businesses and the people. As stated before, though, the American middle-class was not compensated appropriately, giving them less purchasing power. With less purchasing power, fewer goods will be purchased from a market which has over produced, creating a surplus of goods. This economic cycle led to a recession for the American economy, leaving countless people of the middle-class financially weak. Shortly after the middle-class experienced the impacts of recession, the corporations of America also began to crumble and face economic hardships.

Currently, the American economy is undergoing a period of stagnant recession, waiting for some event to trigger an expansion in the economy. A possible solution to the economic downturn is the increased formation of unions. As displayed in past history, the increased formation of unionized workers has proved to stimulate the middle-class to economic success by increasing wages and purchasing power. By passing government regulations and constitutional amendments which allow for union to be formed more easily, then the increased creation of unions will occur, allowing for the middle-class to rise back to power.

Works Cited

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