

“Unions & the Middle Class”

I have lived a good life. The USW has taken care of my father and I quite well, and it is because of them that I will have the awesome opportunity to pursue my dream this fall in college as a musician in the music production and engineering field.

I have not experienced being laid-off, on strike, or been fired. I haven't worked in the cold, heat dark, dust, or grease. I've never worked in or near atmospheres of dangerous gases or billowing fire and smoke. I've never considered the dangers of working at heights or depths at which I would be afraid of falling from or into. I've never considered what kind of safety equipment I should wear when I go to my summer job. Loud, is the volume I listen to my music, not the deafening sounds of industrial machinery.

I have experienced always living in a nice house. I've always lived in a nice neighborhood, with nice friends. I've always attended nice schools and been driven in nice cars. I have always been able to afford doctors when I'm ill, and I have always had a good meal at the end of the day. I sincerely value what I have received from the Union, not only material objects from wages earned, but chances that have been presented to me and doors that have been opened as an affect of my fathers career.

I know that these things didn't happen overnight. Many of my relatives were immigrants, farmers from small villages in Europe. They came to seek “The

American Dream". I know that the improvement in quality of life started taking place as my Great Grandfather became a Steelworker, and that generations of my family have kept this trend alive as they participated through the years as well. I also know it was the persistence of the Union movement's struggle that has created the "Middle Class" that I now benefit from. It began as a dream of a better lifestyle, manifested into reality, and now is the standard of living known as the middle class.

Currently I'm about to experience the next level of education. Registering for college has exposed benefits I will continue to need, benefits from others who have sacrificed in the past to help secure my future. Benefits I've taken for granted such as any medical attention I might need. Basics that I need and use such as dental, vision, prescriptions, and other benefits I am not even aware of. All paid for by my Dad's Steelworker contract, and all still available to help me while I'm away at college.

I simply cannot imagine my life any differently. The Union has been there for me all of my life, and it has not gone unnoticed. I would like to thank the USW yet again, and agree that the concept of Unions and the Middle Class goes hand in hand just as the USW logo displays.