

Union Strong **Unions benefits all workers**

DISCUSSIONS about wage stagnation typically focus on the impact of globalization, labor-saving technology and the drop in the minimum wage. Unions are usually left out of the picture.

This is odd, because the decline of unions has a lot to do with the wage stagnation of private-sector workers over the past 35 years. It follows that an improvement of working families must be accompanied by a resurgence of the labor movement.

During the post-World War II era, wages of American workers increased steadily as union membership grew. But over the last three-and-a-half decades, non-union workers in the private sector have seen their pay stagnate as the private-sector workforce represented by unions has dwindled.

Today, only 7 percent of private-sector workers enjoy union representation, down from about a third in the 1950s. With private-sector unions on life support, the power elite is now taking aim at public-employee

unions, which represent a third of the country's public service workers.

A recent report by the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute shows how non-union workers in the private sector have taken a big hit as the union power has waned. That decline costs the country's 73.1 million non-union workers in the private sector \$133 billion annually in lost wages.

The hardest-hit workers are males with a high-school education or less. They would have earned \$3,015 more annually in 2013 if unions had remained as strong as they were in 1979. Women's wages would be 2 to 3 percent higher.

Unions have a spillover effect in the economy. The higher earnings of unionized workers force private-sector employers to boost the pay of their workers. They want to offer competitive wages while keeping unions out of their worksites.

By raising wages, we stimulate the economy and improve the livelihood of working families.

Connect with DC 37 on:  [Facebook.com/
District Council 37](https://www.facebook.com/DistrictCouncil37)

 [@DistCouncil37](https://twitter.com/DistCouncil37)

 [Instagram.com/
dc37afscme](https://www.instagram.com/dc37afscme)

District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO • 212-815-1000 • Henry Garrido, Executive Director