



Union Strong Unions and Women

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AS labor faces incessant assaults from right-wing politicians and their shadowy allies, the value of unionization for women workers--who stand at the front lines and have made rapid gains in the workforce--is ever more important.

A 2015 report, “Status of Women in the States” by the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, highlights the profound advantages for women who are union members. The report found that women represented by unions earn on average \$212 more a week than their non-union counterparts.

There is less of a gender gap in pay for women in union jobs. They earn 88.7 cents on the dollar compared to men, a far higher ratio than other working women unrepresented by organized labor.

Unions Fight Gender Discrimination

Nearly three-quarters of union women have a pension plan, as opposed to only 42 percent of non-unionized women. Also, women are closing the gender gap in union membership: They now make up nearly 46 percent of union members nationwide. Unionized women constitute 10.5 percent of the national workforce — many are members of public employee unions — while men make up 11.7 percent.

The union stands in the forefront in the fight against job discrimination and gender pay inequality. The union fights for the rights of women in the workplace, against harassment and predatory bosses who daily engage in a full-fledged assault on the rights of workers.

The higher standard of living that unions offer for women — whether they are workers in low-paid service jobs or long-serving public employees — includes pensions, health care coverage, and job stability, can cover only so much at a time when our safety net is fraying.

Importantly, union membership is empowering and a step toward financial independence for many younger women entering the workforce in an economy with a tough jobs market. A recent Pew Research Foundation study shows that the future is back to the past — a far worse past — with 36.4 percent of American women in the 18-34 age group living with their families, a percentage slightly higher than in 1940.

Improved Living Standards

In these troubled economic times, unions are the only effective power dedicated to improving the living conditions of all, especially our sisters, who themselves are the vanguard of the labor movement’s struggle for the betterment of our society.

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