

## The Relevance of Unions in The United States Today

Over the past few years support for unions has continued to steadily increase. Many large companies in the United States such as Amazon and Starbucks have unionized and a large percentage of young people graduating from college or entering the workforce are looking to join unions. These individuals realize the importance of unions and the benefits they fight for to protect employees in the workplace. As the daughter of two current and proud life-long members of unions, I most definitely believe that unions are still relevant today and if given the chance to join one in the future I would. Unions have played a crucial role in maintaining fair and equitable working conditions for all employees for centuries in the United States.

First of all, I feel that unions are and will continue to be relevant to working individuals seeking safe working conditions. It is important that policies and rules are followed and maintained to keep employees safe in their working environment. Most recently, during the Pandemic, The Milwaukee Teachers Union fought in order to protect teachers and students by delaying reopening classrooms in Milwaukee and requiring staff and students to wear masks to help keep them healthy. In addition, they continued to offer virtual learning to families who didn't feel safe returning their students to the classroom environment. Furthermore, unions advocate for strong safety laws and regulations that when followed, have led to less workplace injuries and fewer worker compensation cases, which in return benefit both the employer and employees.

Secondly, unions negotiate for benefits which are relevant to people in the workforce. Employees are looking for better benefits such as health insurance, employer provided pensions, raises and paid sick leave. Raises are especially important so that working individuals have the opportunity to keep up with the rising cost of living. Not long ago, The Milwaukee Teachers Union fought for and won raises for all Milwaukee Public School employees. This is a move in the right direction especially when trying to recruit and retain teachers. Workers who are members of unions are more likely to have increased productivity at their place of employment, have stable mental health and allow them to prepare for an earlier retirement. These benefits allow workers, like myself one day, to feel secure in their jobs and they are able to have a happy balance between work and home life without fear of retribution for taking a day off to care for a sick child or aging parent. Unions have fought to get and keep these benefits which improve the lives of employees.

Subsequently, the relevance of unions is seen in promoting apprenticeships and training for individuals. Apprenticeships offer people the chance to learn on the job while getting paid. Many of the trades offer apprenticeships and businesses like PPG offer people the opportunity to learn new skills in different departments. I believe these opportunities make it easier for employees to find an area in which they can excel or advance in their career which in turn can increase their wage. Both of these options can be very appealing to anyone entering the workforce.

Furthermore, unions ensure that employers are treating their employees equitably. I want to work in an environment in which all people are treated with the same respect and professionalism. All employees should be treated fairly regardless of

age, sex, religion or race. People should have equal opportunities in the workplace. For example, equal pay regardless of whether you are a male or female. Also, all individuals should be given the same chances for advancement in their career no matter the color of their skin, how old they are or their religious beliefs.

In conclusion, I feel that unions are still relevant today and are a critical part of businesses in the United States. Unions appeal to individuals, like myself, who want to be employed by someone who is known to have a safe and equitable workplace as well as provide their employees with quality benefits and training. This quote by John F. Kennedy perfectly sums up the representation of unions, "Our labor unions are not narrow self-seeking groups. They have raised wages, shortened hours and provided supplemental benefits. Through collective bargaining and grievance procedures, they have brought justice and democracy to the shop floor". I believe that unions have always stood up for the greater good of the people and will continue to do so in years to come which is why I will join one if the opportunity arises.