

Union Importance

Unions to the common person are important for many different reasons. Unions such as the United Power Trades Organization or UPTO, provide a powerful and collective voice for their employees to communicate to their management about their unhappiness with their work place safety and working conditions. Unions helped fight for the workers and provide them with things like the Fair Labor Standards Act, fair wages, Family and Medical Leave Act, and fringe benefits.

The Fair Labor Standards Act was enacted to help the American worker by having both shorter work hours each day and a shorter work week. So that workers can have a break from working and some leisure time to rest, which is important to insuring employees are in better shape to perform their duties.

Labor Unions started and engaged in massive strikes by demanding to get these shorter work weeks. The act was finally passed in 1937 by creating enough political support to pass the Fair Labor Standards Act. But even then the Unions would have to make sure the employees got paid fairly by their employers.

By the help of unions, the wages of unionized workers was raised by roughly 20%. Along with the rise of the compensation which does include both wages and benefits by about 28%, roughly. Unions usually do target larger firms with a concentrated industry. But unions do have an effect on industrial wages, by raising wages for lower and middle class workers. Whether they are low-skilled or high-skilled workers, workers with a college education, or workers who do not have a college degree, the unions help raise the standards for all. Besides higher wages as benefits for unionized workers, Unions fought for the Family and Medical Leave Act.

The Family and Medical Leave Act FMLA enacted in 1993 to grant families a temporary medical leave for certain situations, such as personal or family illness, family military leave and pregnancy. FMLA was intended to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families. This leave however is unpaid for any worker. But the worker during any 12 month period can get 12 weeks off while their job is protected while taking this time off. Another benefit given to unionized workers are fringe benefits.

Unions have fought for workers so that they can get other types of benefits. Especially if the employer couldn't go to higher on wages without laying off its workers. Unions got Employers to offer a health insurance plans to their workers. Some of these insurances include different plans for the worker and their families. One of which is medical, to help pay for prescriptions. Another being dental plans that worker and their family gets. They also provide

sick pay leave and pay vacation and holiday leave time. Also giving their workers discounts in certain shopping places hotels and resorts.

As you can see Unions are important to the common blue-collar American worker. If it wasn't for unions, people might still be working 60 hour weeks or more with little pay to show for their work done. Unions prevent people from being fired for having to leave work to help a family member or themselves. Along with having no compensation from their employers if they get hurt and can't pay the medical bill fully. Unions are the reason why Americans can survive and live, and have a good life from their jobs, because of unions fighting and protecting workers' rights such as Fair Labor Standards Act, fair wages, Family and Medical Leave Act, and fringe benefits.

With all this said, I still look to my father for his opinion. His belief is that Unions have provided lots of help to workers. That they have created high standards for not just union employees but all employees throughout all industries for wages, safety, education and more.

But he does not believe that all unions are created equally. His example of this is back in the day US ACE trades workers dropped one union that they felt wasn't working in their best interest. And they replaced it with what they presently have, UPTO. His opinion on this is that UPTO was created correctly. He says it's a union by the workers for the workers.

This sounds like a Union that I'd like to have the good fortune to be a member of in my working life. A Union made up of my fellow brother and sister workers seems ideal to me.