

What Unionism Means to Me

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Growing up with both of my parents in a union, it is surprising how ignorant I was to the importance of unions for a long time. It took until last year for me to realize how critical they are to workers everywhere. They help every working individual. In a union, there are not workers that receive better benefits than someone else. We are all in this together, and I believe that a union highlights the importance of this.

A few years ago, my father was worried when he overheard that some of his friends had lost their jobs. It was scary to think that people I knew personally could give so much to a company and receive so little in return. My father was worried because the company he worked for was reducing workers and he feared that he could be the next to go. This terrified me. My parents have always supported me and done everything they possibly could to help me plan my future, but I knew how drastic our life would change when our household income was cut in half. Thankfully, my father spoke to the union he is apart of and learned about what could happen and what could not happen, and our fears were diminished. We had security. Having security means nothing to fear.

Unions protect the rights of workers. In a world where people are still fighting for rights, it comforts me to know that in a workplace, unions are fighting along with me. A union is a safety net that protects workers from unsafe environments, unequal treatment and unfair wages. A union gives a voice to those who would otherwise be silenced. A union is a road that leads to equity. In our world, I believe equal treatment among everyone is important. Unions help us achieve that.

The benefits that unions provide are incredible. Safe working conditions, a livable minimum wage and job security. These are things that I think most people take for granted. In a world without unions, fighting for pleasing working conditions would be hard. Businesses may be uninterested when it comes to a single employee demanding more rights. Yet, when a union representative speaks on behalf of every single employee, it is easier to get the business to listen. It is easy for businesses to remove jobs from individuals without thinking of the devastating consequences that a lack of income can have on a family. Especially if that individual believes

that the rights of the workplace are in need of a change. Most workers are scared to speak up and say that something in the workplace is unfair, because they are afraid that fighting for what is right may cost them their job. This is why a union is so important. It removes that fear and allows the individual to speak freely about their concerns in a workplace without wondering if that concern could terminate their employment.

In conclusion, unionism is a team. Every worker joins together to fight for their rights, and the union gives them the pedestal and the megaphone to help them get noticed. Without unions, it would be extremely difficult to get large businesses to pay attention to the workers. On the contrary, with a union, we can rightfully say that every working individual matters and deserves rights, no matter what their title is.