Economic
Policy
Institute

Building the movement for workers' rights and wages

EPI's accomplishments in 2018

For too long, ordinary Americans have missed out on the gains of a growing economy. This wasn't an accident. Policy choices allowed the rich to capture much more than their fair share of American income growth. In 2018 EPI published a bold and expansive policy agenda to restore balance and ensure that prosperity is broadly shared. And EPI's Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN) released *A State Agenda for America's Workers* with the National Employment Law Project that calls on governors and state legislatures to confront rising inequality, eroding worker power, and structural racism affecting workers of color and immigrants.

Although the agendas were released toward the end of 2018, EPI's work throughout the year laid the groundwork for elevating these policies onto the national agenda and in statehouses across the country. EPI strengthened its connections with grassroots advocates and policymakers to get EPI's research and policy solutions into the hands of activists and lawmakers who can make change happen. And EPI made the case for bold, comprehensive action by expanding our reach in print, online, and broadcast media.

As a result, our work helped win passage of pro-worker policies like state-level minimum wage increases; thwart attempts to pass bad policies, like "right-to-work" in Missouri; broaden public support for policies such as banning mandatory arbitration; and steer debates about key issues like the wage effect of employer labor market concentration in a more useful direction. We also exposed the lies behind bad policies like the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act and the tip-pooling ("tip-stealing") rule. In these ways, EPI set the stage for crafting and passing more pro-worker legislation in the coming years. Following are some of EPI's wins on behalf of American workers in 2018.

Explaining why wages stay stuck and inequality keeps growing despite economic growth

In 2018, many people were asking, "Why are wages still stagnating when the economy *appears* to be doing well?" EPI provided answers, validating workers' sense that the economy was not working well *for them* and shifting focus from plausible-sounding but hollow explanations to real root causes.

Documenting slow wage growth despite rising work hours and an improving economy

In March 2018, senior EPI economist Elise Gould released her annual *State of American Wages report*, confirming slow and uneven wage growth in the last year (up 0.2 percent for median workers) but improvement for all deciles in the wage distribution since 2007. Rising inequality means that although we are finally seeing wage growth for workers in all wage groups (percentiles), decades of relatively slow wage growth means "ordinary workers are just making up lost ground rather than getting ahead," Gould explained. Like the *State of Working America Data Library* from which the report draws, Gould's report is the definitive look at wage inequality—overall, by gender, by race and ethnicity, and by education—in the United States. *The New York Times* calls it "an annual report card on American pay." Media outlets focused on the good and bad news in the report, with *The New York Times* column noting that real wages grew the most in 2017 (up 3.7 percent) for low-wage (10th-percentile) workers, in part because of minimum wage increases in many states, while *Bloomberg* observed that "U.S. wage growth remains slow and uneven, with African-Americans and women still at a clear disadvantage while the wealthiest are accumulating more money than ever."

In September, Gould, EPI Vice President John Schmitt, and EPI Research Director Josh Bivens wrote a major report on wage trends from the end of World War II to the present for a joint event with The Century Foundation on "Raising Wages." The event featured addresses by Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and former Vice President Joe Biden, as well as remarks by American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten.

With wages practically stagnant, almost all of the growth in annual earnings that we've seen since 1979 has been because people are working longer hours, according to an EPI report tracking annual hours worked by gender, race, and ethnicity. But as Valerie Wilson, one of the report's authors and the director of EPI's Program on Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy, said, "Unfortunately, with a fixed number of hours in a day—and with workers given little control over their schedules—there are limits to how far people can boost their annual pay by working longer hours."

Underscoring that economic growth continues to redistribute upward—to CEOs and the top 1 percent

The situation for ordinary workers starkly contrasts with those at the top, as shown in *The New Gilded Age*, released by EPI in July. The report describes income inequality in the U.S. by state, metropolitan area, and county, and finds that the top 1 percent of families in the United States took home, on average, 26.3 times as much income as the bottom 99 percent in 2015. The report received widespread media attention, with mentions in over 130 news stories, including in CNBC, *CBS MoneyWatch*, *MarketWatch*, *VICE News*, *Jacobin*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Denver Post*, *Forbes*, and WBUR in Boston, among other local news outlets. EPI produced two maps, showing inequality by state and what it takes to be in the top 1 percent in each state, both of which were widely shared on social media.

The upward march of inequality was also spotlighted in an EPI analysis of wage growth among the very highest earners. It showed that average wages of the top 1.0 percent reached their highest level ever in 2017—rising to $719,000, up 157 percent since 1979. In comparison, wages for the bottom 90 percent increased 22 percent in that period. *Marketwatch* and the *Detroit Free Press* covered the conundrum of a thriving economy where middle-class workers are struggling to get by.

EPI's widely cited annual CEO pay report found that CEO compensation surged in 2017—by 17.6 percent—compared with a mere 0.3 percent for typical workers, raising the CEO-to-worker compensation ratio to 312-to-1, up from 20-to-1 in 1965. The ratio is a vivid marker of the era of inequality that we are in. The CEO pay report was covered by media outlets such as *Vox*, *Jezebel*, and *Splinter* and was featured on Univision and on HBO's *Wyatt Cenac's Problem Areas* on HBO. An infographic on skyrocketing CEO pay was shared nearly 3,000 times on Facebook, reaching 165,000 people. And EPI's CEO pay ratios were cited in at least one shareholder proposal blasting a corporation's executive compensation system for being socially irresponsible.

Pushing back on false explanations for wage stagnation

Just as important as documenting wage trends is pushing back at false explanations for wage stagnation. A series of analyses by EPI in 2018 confronted the backward logic of the notion that workers' wages are growing slowly because they don't have the skills employers need. If there were skills shortages, we would see signs of faster wage growth for workers with needed skills, argued EPI senior economist Elise Gould and senior economist and Director of Policy Heidi Shierholz.

Implicating broader employer power—not just monopsony—as the real causes of wage stagnation

In 2018, “monopsony power” (the power held by employers when there are a limited number of employers “buying” labor) was increasingly discussed as an explanation for slow wage growth. Along with the focus on monopsony power, antitrust action became a much-debated solution. EPI welcomed the focus on market power as a force threatening wages of typical American families, noting that it represented a needed shift away from blaming slow wage growth on “new technologies” and other explanations that work only in textbook models of perfectly competitive labor markets. Indeed, a widely cited report on the proposed Sprint–T-Mobile Merger, released jointly by EPI and the Roosevelt Institute, called for the Federal Trade Commission and other enforcers with a mandate to preserve competition to take labor markets into account when assessing the competitive effects of any merger or conduct they might review.

But in reports, events with the Roosevelt Institute and the Open Markets Institute, public comments, and briefings, EPI economists helped popularize a more expansive definition of monopsony power to include various tools employers use to depress wages unilaterally or collusively (such as noncompete clauses) and highlighted the critical role of weakened worker power.

In *It’s Not Just Monopoly and Monopsony*, Josh Bivens, Lawrence Mishel, and John Schmitt persuasively argued that labor market concentration may lower wages but concentration has not contributed much to wage stagnation and growing inequality. Specifically, there is no evidence that labor concentration has increased or that the wage impact of concentration has increased. Rather, workers are not enjoying the fruits of their labor because the countervailing power that American workers once wielded through collective bargaining and high labor standards has been radically weakened. Policymakers who want to raise wages must go well beyond antitrust reform to focus on the many policies that could strengthen workers’ leverage and bargaining power.

In *What Labor Market Changes Have Generated Inequality and Wage Suppression?*, EPI’s Josh Bivens and Heidi Shierholz explained how employer power exists even in markets with lots of employers, and laid out some policies that would bolster the leverage of workers. Labor market changes that have suppressed labor compensation for the bottom 90 percent since 1979 have cost these workers about $1.35 trillion, or about $10,800 per household, the report found. EPI’s more comprehensive explanation for wage stagnation was covered by numerous media outlets, from *The Washington Post* to *The American Prospect* to *Daily Kos* to *Pacific Standard*.

Developing the research framework that supports the grassroots movement to restore worker power

At EPI's fundraising reception in November, Reverend William Barber II closed the evening reflecting on EPI's fight for economic justice and the soul of the nation. In his address, he spoke about how we need to work together to protect all members of our society. And he commended EPI for engaging in research that elevates the economic dignity of working Americans—and getting that research into the hands of activists and lawmakers who can make it real. Here are specific ways EPI worked to restore worker power in 2018.

Proposing reforms that would rebalance the system back in workers' favor

In 2018, EPI released "First Day Fairness," a 15-point plank (of its larger policy agenda) that seeks to get decent wages back into the pockets of workers by giving them more power at the bargaining table. First Day Fairness calls for updating labor laws so that employers hostile to unions don't hold all the cards, and for tackling a long and growing list of tactics—such as mandatory arbitration and noncompete agreements—used by employers to keep workers' bargaining power weak and their wages down. To educate regular people about their rights, EPI shared a "How Fair Is Your Job" quiz on social media. *The American Prospect* reported that the reforms "would help rebalance a system that's currently tilted against workers." In *The Hill*, EPI Policy Director Heidi Shierholz called on policymakers to "stand up for working people, restoring the rights that have been chipped away at for the past four decades and instituting new ones to adapt to the changing nature of work." Coverage of the agenda appeared in *The Week*, Bloomberg, Truthout, *Daily Kos*, and *Politico*. Throughout the year, EPI tackled the corporate practices and government policies that have sapped power from workers.

Highlighting how mandatory arbitration and other anti-competitive employment practices limit workers' rights

Mandatory private arbitration in job disputes and noncompete agreements—clauses slipped into the fine print of employment contracts—are becoming common, even among middle-income earners and some fast-food employees. EPI research shows how these anti-competitive practices hurt workers. Under mandatory arbitration agreements, workers who have not been paid fairly, or who have been discriminated against, or who have been sexually harassed, can't pursue their claims in court but must submit to arbitration procedures that research shows overwhelmingly favor employers. In 2017 EPI published a pathbreaking report showing how extensive force arbitration agreements are. In 2018, EPI released an expanded version of the report detailing the demographic groups most affected. Over half of private-sector nonunion employees—some 60 million American workers—are now subject to mandatory arbitration agreements and thus no longer have access to the courts to protect their legal employment rights. Further, when coupled with class action waivers, where workers sign away their right to pursue workplace disputes on a collective or class basis, mandatory arbitration can deter workers from coming forward in the first place. *U.S. News & World Report*, *CNN Money*, *The Sacramento Bee*, *The Orange County Register*, Refinery29, *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee* and *Vox* were but a handful of the many media outlets covering EPI's research as mandatory arbitration agreements became prominent in the mainstream debate with the expansion of the #MeToo movement: Women who were sexually harassed and subject to these arbitration agreements have not been able to bring their harassers to court and not able to share their stories because arbitrations are kept secret. In response to the public outcry over arbitration agreements restricting the ability to combat sexual harrassment, companies such as Uber and Lyft and Microsoft dropped their mandatory arbitration requirements for claims of sexual harassment, and the California legislature passed a bill (later vetoed by the governor) banning arbitration agreements by employers. Throughout 2018, EPI continued to call attention to the many ways that mandatory arbitration agreements and class action waivers hurt all workers, and disproportionately impact women of color.

When the Supreme Court's 5–4 decision in *Epic Systems Corp. v. Lewis (*consolidated from *NLRB v. Murphy Oil* and *Ernst & Young LLP v. Morris*) basically greenlighted mandatory arbitration agreements with class action waivers, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg cited EPI's report in her dissent. Mainstream media accounts reported EPI's estimate that the decision would help spread the adoption of mandatory arbitration and class action waivers to more than 80 percent of workplaces in as few as six years. In a statement, EPI called on Congress "to restore this fundamental right and ban mandatory arbitration agreements and class and collective action waivers." To that end, EPI worked with a broad coalition supporting legislative action and awareness around this issue, provided technical assistance to drafters of a bill banning mandatory arbitration in labor and employment matters, and held an event with the National Women's Law Center, the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD), and the Harvard Labor and Worklife Program. EPI research is also informing efforts by CPD, Public Citizen, National Employment Law Project, Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO, and the American Association for Justice to craft a new federal bill to ban mandatory arbitration that will be introduced in 2019.

For years EPI has sounded the alarm over noncompete agreements, which contribute to stagnating pay by limiting workers' employment options. Labor mobility is fundamental to the ability to earn good wages, but an estimated 30 million U.S. employees, many of them relatively low-wage workers, are prevented from leaving their jobs for better wages elsewhere because they are bound by noncompete agreements, EPI research finds. Although legislative proposals are not in the works, EPI in a 2018 report called on state attorneys general to challenge the use of noncompete agreements, following the lead of the Illinois attorney general. In 2018 states took action: Massachusetts enacted a law restricting enforcement of companies' noncompete clauses, and the Washington State attorney general announced agreements with eight restaurant chains to remove clauses from franchisee contracts that prevent franchisees from hiring one another's employees. And widespread attention to the issue is forcing some employers to examine their practices. For example, shareholder activists are asking prominent companies to disclose their use of noncompete agreements, no-poaching rules, and mandatory arbitration.

Safeguarding workers' rights through joint-employer liability

EPI has played a critical role in seeking to protect workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively by preserving the National Labor Relations Board's 2015 joint-employer standard and by exposing efforts to pass state laws shielding joint employers from liability for violating employees' rights. Under the joint-employer standard, when two or more businesses determine or have control over a worker's pay, schedule, job duties, or other important terms and conditions of employment, the businesses are jointly held accountable as employers and responsible for violations of employment and labor laws. Without that standard, employers can avoid the bargaining table by contract for services rather than hiring employees directly. With that standard, firms must come to the bargaining table. EPI research has clarified what is at stake as policymakers beholden to corporate interests seek to block enforcement of the standard, and as states enact shield laws. EPI's Celine McNicholas did a video explainer that got more than 5,000 views on Facebook, and EPI experts have held briefings on the joint-employer issue and submitted comments noting that the administration's efforts to weaken the joint-employer standard would cost working people $1.3 billion in wages annually. Those lost wages were cited by the National Employment Law Project and *Daily Kos*—partner organizations in the campaign against the change. An EPI email campaign calling attention to the proposed weakening of the joint-employer standard garnered 12,000 comments—more than two-thirds of all comments submitted. EPI's comments were covered by *Bloomberg*, *Newsweek*, *Reuters*, and the subscription-based *Law360* and *Politico Pro*.

Preserving workers' rights to collective bargaining

Sixty percent of adults have a favorable view of labor unions but only 10.7 percent of wage and salary workers are union members. The disconnect is the result of decades of fierce opposition to unions and collective bargaining. Employers exploit loopholes in outdated labor law to defeat workers' organizing efforts, while corporate lobbyists block attempts at reform. It's no accident that as union membership has dropped, the top 10 percent's share of overall income has risen. In 2018 EPI supported updated collective bargaining rules and shined a light on the legislative and legal campaigns to thwart unions.

During a workplace election to form a union, it is standard practice for workers to be subjected to threats, interrogation, harassment, surveillance, and retaliation for union activity. In 2018 EPI fought business-backed efforts to overturn a 2015 NLRB rule that streamlined the election process by increasing transparency in union elections, eliminating unnecessary litigation, and making it possible for employees seeking to vote on union representation to cast their votes in a timelier manner. In public comments supporting the rule, EPI noted that "the corporate interest groups committed to rescinding the Rule and having Congress codify a mandatory waiting period for a union election simply want employers to have more time to defeat an organizing campaign." Joining with the National Employment Law Project and union allies, EPI helped generate a sufficient number of meaningful comments to require the NLRB to review and address them before going forward.

In 2018, EPI also confronted legislative and legal campaigns to weaken unions by depriving them of the resources they need to operate. EPI worked with partners to stop the spread of so-called right-to-work (RTW) laws and exposed the harms of the corporate-led push to defund unions in the courts.

Passed in 27 states, RTW laws undermine the finances of private-sector unions by preventing them from being able to require that nonunion bargaining-unit members—workers that unions are required by law to represent—pay their fair share of the cost of that representation. EPI research has shown that RTW laws have contributed to a reduction in union membership and are associated with a decline in wages and benefits for union and nonunion workers alike. In 2018, as Missouri voters were gearing up to vote on a "right-to-work" referendum, EPI produced a series of fact sheets and reports that showed why RTW was wrong for Missourians, particularly black workers. EPI experts gave interviews, released statements, and wrote op-eds about the initiative. EPI's research on RTW in Missouri received widespread media attention, appearing in over 40 news stories and generating more than 1,500 clips (including syndication and wire services), including in *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *HuffPost*, *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, *The Missouri Times*, *The Kansas City Star*, *Columbia Daily Tribune*, *Vox*, *Mother Jones*, *Splinter News*, *Rewire News*, and Reuters. Additionally, commentators and reporters drew on previous EPI analyses of right-to-work—notably, EPI's finding that workers have 3 percent lower wages in states with RTW laws, and that union decline lowers wages of nonunion workers. On August 7, 2018, voters in Missouri rejected the RTW law at the ballot box by a 2-to-1 margin.

An EPI report released early in 2018 warned that *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31*, an upcoming case before the U.S. Supreme Court, was aimed at attacking the rights of public-sector union members. The case involved a First Amendment challenge to state laws that allow public-sector unions to require state and local government workers who are not union members, but who are represented by a union, to pay "fair share" or "agency" fees for the benefits they receive from union representation. *Janus* was being financed by a small group of foundations with ties to the largest and most powerful corporate lobbies as part of an agenda "to weaken unions and shift power away from ordinary workers," the report found. Report co-author Celine McNicholas did a video explainer on *Janus*, and *The Washington Post*, Wisconsin Public Radio's *Morning Show*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and *Splinter News* were among the media outlets covering EPI's research. EPI published briefs showing that a decision stripping unions of their ability to collect fair share fees would hurt all state and local government workers, and black women in particular, and would threaten the quality of public-sector jobs and public services. When the Supreme Court ruled in June 2018 that it was unconstitutional for public-sector unions to require collective bargaining fees from workers, EPI's Celine McNicholas predicted that the victory for anti-union forces would be short-lived, as coverage of the case by cable news and newspapers raised awareness among working people of the need to fight for their rights. Strikes by teachers spreading across the country are already demonstrating the power of economic justice to rally working people to the cause, she said.

Finally, in 2018 the EPI Policy Center helped to develop the Workers' Freedom to Negotiate Act and called on Congress to pass the act, launching an email campaign viewed by 52,000 people to generate popular support for the act. The act, introduced by Sens. Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Bobby Scott (D-Va.), would modernize the National Labor Relations Act to make it much harder for employers to violate workers' rights to join together to negotiate for better wages and working conditions.

Demonstrating the real-world benefits of progressive policies

In 2010, the neighboring states of Wisconsin and Minnesota embarked on divergent political paths when voters elected a conservative, Scott Walker, as governor of Wisconsin and a progressive, Mark Dayton, as governor of Minnesota. Because these states were neighbors who had suffered similarly from the Great Recession that began in 2008, their post-recession economic performance provides useful evidence on the effect of divergent policy paths. Governor Walker and the Wisconsin state legislature pursued a highly conservative agenda centered on cutting taxes, shrinking government, and weakening unions. In contrast, Minnesota lawmakers working with Governor Dayton enacted a slate of progressive priorities: raising the minimum wage, strengthening safety net programs and labor standards, and boosting public investments in infrastructure and education, financed through higher taxes (largely on the wealthy). A 2018 report by EPI's David Cooper, senior economic analyst and deputy director of EARN, shows that Minnesota's economy outperformed Wisconsin's on growth in employment, wages, and median household incomes. The report and accompanying infographic garnered widespread attention, with mentions in the *StarTribune*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, *The New York Times*, *The Buffalo News*, *The American Prospect*, *Daily Kos*, and on Wisconsin Public Radio and other broadcast outlets. An accompanying infographic was shared over 1,200 times on social media.

At an EPI event featuring a new book called *The Fall of Wisconsin: The Conservative Conquest of a Progressive Bastion and the Future of American Politics*, author Dan Kaufman explained how the "divide-and-conquer" strategy of Governor Scott Walker and his allies pitted Wisconsin's citizens against one another so that powerful corporations and wealthy donors could effectively take control of the state government. As a result, laws protecting voting rights, labor unions, the environment, and public education were rapidly dismantled.

Providing EPI data to win real improvements in wages and job quality for workers

Moving bold minimum wage increases into the mainstream

Pay for the vast majority of America's workers has been stagnant for decades. One of the simplest ways to accelerate wage growth for low- and moderate-wage workers is to raise the minimum wage. Yet Congress last raised the federal minimum wage in 2009, to $7.25, and efforts to raise state and local minimum wages are often opposed by businesses, who promulgate faulty research to support their cause. In 2018 EPI pushed back on faulty research, strengthened the empirical case for bold increases to the minimum wage (to $15 an hour or more), showed that tipped workers do better in jurisdictions where they are paid the same minimum wage as other workers, and worked with its Economic Analysis and Research Network (EARN) partners across the country to raise minimum wages in cities and states.

Critics of raising minimum wages have successfully imposed a job-loss frame to obscure the benefits of raising minimum wages for the broad group of low-wage workers. In 2018, new EPI research tackling that distorted frame helped shift the way that policymakers, journalists, and the public evaluate proposed minimum wage changes. Authors David Cooper, Lawrence Mishel, and Ben Zipperer showed that even if minimum wage earners work fewer hours as a result of a minimum wage increase, they still come out ahead when you look at their yearly take-home pay. EPI also exposed the methodological flaws in a report by a team studying Seattle's minimum wage increase to $15 an hour. EPI's analysis showed that the researchers mistakenly attributed employment losses to the minimum wage hike, when in reality Seattle's economic boom simply meant that low-wage jobs were converted into higher-wage jobs. Another 2018 EPI brief demonstrated that raising the minimum wage would lift millions of African Americans and Hispanics out of poverty. And EPI made regular updates to its Minimum Wage Tracker, a map showing which states and localities have raised their own minimum wages. The tracker had about 110,000 page views in 2018. Media outlets including *CNN Money*, *Splinter News*, *VICE News*, and *The New York Times* covered EPI's research, amplifying EPI's call to look at employment effects more closely and evaluate minimum wage increases based on their net benefits to workers. Citing EPI's minimum wage map data, CNBC noted that the once far-fetched "Fight for $15" movement "has come into the mainstream." EPI's minimum wage work exemplifies how EPI operates "upstream," presenting views considered contrary in the beginning but becoming mainstream later.

On the state and local level, EARN has been involved in over 100 minimum wage campaigns with more than 30 victories in the last five years alone. Successful campaigns in 2018 included those in Arkansas, Missouri, Massachusetts, and St. Paul, Minnesota. EPI provided the data and analysis used by advocates to push for the increase, while EARN partners were critical in getting research into the hands of advocates and lawmakers. The new laws will raise pay for an estimated 300,000 workers in Arkansas and will lift pay for 677,000 workers in Missouri alone. And, as David Cooper noted in a year-end blog post, over 5 million workers got a pay raise on the first day of 2019 due to state minimum wage increases (inflation adjustments and statutory hourly pay raises) going into effect.

Supporting teacher strikes for higher pay

Teachers striking in West Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Colorado in 2018 were protesting the cutbacks in spending that hurt their students but also the deteriorating teacher pay. EPI has been documenting the “teacher pay penalty”—the gap between teacher’s weekly wages and wages of comparably educated and experienced workers—since 2004. In 2018, EPI and the University of California’s Center on Wage and Employment Dynamics released its latest analysis, *The Teacher Pay Penalty Has Hit a New High*. The report, by EPI past President Lawrence Mishel and Sylvia Allegretto found that the gap between teacher’s weekly wages and wages of comparably educated and experienced workers is wider than ever, growing to 18.7 percent in 2017. The report got over 140,000 page views on EPI’s website and was highlighted in over 30 news stories, including in *The Guardian*, *CBS MoneyWatch*, *The Atlantic*’s *CityLab*, *Jacobin,* and a cover story in *Time* magazine. The National Education Association plans to use EPI’s teacher pay data to track teacher pay state by state.

EPI’s research on teacher pay—including the finding that the teacher pay penalty is smaller in states with stronger collective bargaining rights for teachers—was widely cited in stories covering the 2018 teacher strikes, generating more than 500 clips (including syndication and wire services). Coverage ranged from new broadcast programs such as HBO’s *Wyatt Cenac’s Problem Areas* to established media such as *The Atlantic*. In an opinion piece, “Why Teachers Are Fighting Back,” posted on CNN.com, Minnesota Attorney General and former U.S. Congressman Keith Ellison posited that public employees, and working people in general, are tired of being undervalued, citing EPI’s research and the huge gap between CEO pay and average workers.

At EPI’s Research · Power · Justice reception in November, Katie Endicott, a West Virginia teacher, reflected on how she and other teachers stood up for their fellow workers and students when they went on strike this year to demand a living wage and benefits. In early 2019, Sylvia Allegretto posted a video explaining the link between teacher pay gaps by state and the strikes.

Throughout the year, EPI’s graphics and charts showing how underpaid teachers are were hits on social media. One infographic was shared nearly 4,500 times, reaching more than 315,000 Facebook users. Another was shared 1,300 times, reaching more than 82,000 users.

Guiding state action on overtime pay

A 2016 federal rule to ensure that more workers get paid when they must work overtime was blocked in the courts by corporate interests. EPI's Overtime Pay Cut Tracker continues to track the millions that American workers are losing each day without updated federal overtime standards. With progress at the federal level stalled, EPI and EARN pivoted to the states. In conjunction with the National Employment Law Project and the Center for American Progress, several EARN partners and EPI have gotten governors in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Washington to begin the process of publishing state-level overtime rules. These efforts drew on EPI and EARN's work in late 2017 to release a briefing paper and detailed policy and legislative guidance for state policymakers to intervene where federal policy has failed. In late 2017, EPI signed a letter in support of federal legislation, introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Patty Murray (D-Wash.) and Reps. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) and Bobby Scott (D-Va.), that would update the Fair Labor Standards Act to restore overtime pay protections to millions of workers. This would give 12 million workers new or stronger rights to get paid overtime when they work more than 40 hours in a week. EPI continued to draw attention to the issue in 2018, paving the way for a proposed new federal bill in 2019 that would codify the Obama-era overtime rule. At the same time, EPI opposed the proposed Workflex in the 21st Century Act, which would have given workers no new rights they didn't already have but would have given employers the right to avoid paying overtime as required for hours over 40 hours per week.

Elevating fair scheduling and paid leave as basic worker rights

When employers change or cancel their workers' scheduled hours on short notice, it adds to the strain working families face as they try to pay bills with uneven income and juggle schedules to arrange for child care or hold down a second job. Working with the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD), EPI researchers produced and disseminated a report estimating that 1.8 million workers have benefited from state and local laws to guarantee fair scheduling or provide protections for workers who request flexibility in their work schedules. An accompanying infographic helped spread the findings via social media. EPI has also joined a group of academics supported by the Russell Sage Foundation to do the next generation of research in support of fair scheduling.

EPI has long pushed for paid sick days and family leave, noting that most low-wage workers lack paid sick days or family leave, which means that taking a day to care for a family member could cost them significant lost wages or even their job. An analysis by EPI's Elise Gould released on the 25th anniversary of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) noted the large loophole in the FMLA—that it doesn't guarantee paid leave. The FMLA requires only that employers offer up to 12 weeks of *unpaid*, job-protected leave to employees to deal with their own or a family member's serious health condition, or to give birth to or care for a newly born, adopted, or foster child. As Gould pointed out, about 45 percent of FMLA-eligible workers did not take leave because they could not afford unpaid leave. Workers in the top 10 percent of the wage distribution are six times more likely to have paid family and medical leave than workers in the bottom 10 percent: 26 percent of top 10 percent workers have paid leave compared with 4 percent in the bottom 10 percent. The findings were shared on social media, including in retweets by groups such as MomsRising, Zero to Three, and the Colorado Fiscal Institute. EPI continues to support local efforts to pass paid leave, including by exposing state laws that prevent local governments from offering paid leave. In 2018, the Maryland legislature enacted a bill granting Marylander workers access to paid sick days, giving nearly 700,000 workers access to paid sick days, noted a blog post by Gould and EPI's Jessica Schieder. Over the years, EPI testimony had helped build the case for the Maryland law. Ultimately, Gould argues, national paid family leave policy is needed to ensure that all workers benefit. EPI's Policy Agenda calls on policymakers to "establish national paid family leave that covers all workers, regardless of firm size, work hours, or tenure."

Many states and localities have filled the void left by federal policymakers and passed sick days and family leave laws. As mentioned above, EPI opposed the Workflex in the 21st Century Act, a misleadingly named bill that would have allowed employers to avoid their obligations under state and local paid sick day and paid family leave laws. The letter noted that "as of June 2018, 10 states and 32 localities have already won hard-fought victories establishing requirements for workers to have access to paid sick days. The bill would "reverse those gains in one fell swoop, by giving employers a free pass to ignore any state and local laws that attempt to raise the bar on paid leave protections, so long as they can claim to offer some minimal standard of paid time off (while maintaining full control over when and how employees could even use that time)."

Calling out state 'preemption laws' that void local workers' rights laws

Cities, counties, and other local governments are enacting minimum wage increases, paid sick days laws, fair scheduling requirements, and other policies that raise standards for working people. But state legislatures are lowering those standards back down with preemption—the use of state law to void local ordinances. EPI's updated preemption map shows that 44 states have preemption laws that target key worker rights. New in 2018, the map now tracks states with "gig economy laws" that preempt localities from regulating certain types of companies, such as Uber and Lyft, that treat their workers as independent contractors without the rights afforded to employees.

Using data-driven analytics to cut through the hype about 'the future of work'

To listen to the hype over "the future of work," one would assume that someday all workers will be either robots or gig workers—and that we have already shifted toward becoming a nation of freelancers. The danger of these fantasies is that they suck public and policy attention away from the real issues needing attention, like stagnating wages and declining worker power. Urging that we keep our attention on the right goals, former EPI President and distinguished fellow Larry Mishel has long criticized the common flaw in these accounts: They focus on the *number* of people doing something, not the hours they work or the wages they earn.

Analyses by Mishel and other EPI researchers in 2018 helped puncture the myth. Mishel's 2018 study of Uber and gig work showed that gig workers make up a very small part of the economy, and that Uber drivers and other digitally recruited personal service workers earn low wages and mostly work part time to supplement their income rather than to make a living. An EPI graphic detailing how much Uber drivers get paid reached nearly 500,000 Facebook users and received over 48,000 engagements (likes, shares, or comments), making it EPI's biggest piece of viral content of the year.

In a series of research pieces dating back to 2015 Mishel has documented that the number of people in the "gig economy" or self-employed has not increased much, that those involved primarily do so to earn supplementary income and for a small number of hours, and that the economic scale of these activities has not changed much when measured as a share of economywide total hours worked, earnings, or compensation as compared to headcount measures of self-employment. For instance, as a 2018 blog post by Mishel and EPI's Julia Wolfe noted, U.S. Census data affirms the finding that self-employed individuals operating unincorporated businesses aren't growing as a share of overall economic activity. Mishel also published research using Social Security data that confirmed that the self-employment headcount has risen but the overall economic impact remained small.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics corroborated Mishel's point about putting the gig economy in proper context. A new BLS Contingent Worker Survey released in June showed that the share of working people in the U.S. who were self-employed in 2017 was no greater than it was in 2005 or 1995, an EPI statement explained. EPI's findings on Uber and the gig economy in general were widely covered, including in *Quartz*, *The New York Times*, *MarketWatch*, *CityLab*, *The Washington Post*, and *Mother Jones*. There are real issues with the future of work, but they involve the continuing challenge of earning a decent living. As Heidi Shierholz told *The Washington Post*, "the vast majority of workers in the United States still have traditional jobs as their main source of income. We should be spending most of our time thinking about boosting wages in traditional jobs so people don't need a side hustle."

Keeping eyes on the prize of full employment and an economy that works for everyone

Monitoring how well the economy is actually working for Americans

Every month or quarter, the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other government agencies release reports on the state of the economy. EPI analyses and interviews with the press help journalists and policymakers understand what data on job growth, unemployment, wage growth, and other indicators really tell us about the health of the economy and whether it's working for ordinary Americans. Throughout 2018, EPI economists Elise Gould and Josh Bivens called attention to the indicators that showed that the economy was not as strong as the topline numbers—like the unemployment rate—suggest. In 2018 EPI launched an "Economic Indicators" site that features Gould's monthly analyses of important but overlooked indicators such as average nominal wage growth and the share of Americans who aren't technically in the labor force (e.g., they have given up looking for work) but who want jobs. In blog posts and media interviews, EPI pays consistent attention to the fact that wages are stagnating despite a gradual improvement in topline economic indicators. This attention helps pressure lawmakers and the Fed to pursue policies that help working people.

Drilling down on employment in the states by race and ethnicity

Rosy depictions of an economy in full recovery often overlook pockets of persistent high unemployment in certain states and among black and Hispanic workers. Because we believe that no workers should be left behind, EPI produces a quarterly analysis of unemployment by state, race, and ethnicity to call attention to the work left to do. This analysis always garners a great deal of interest because it shows that black workers are still not sharing the benefits of nationwide employment gains. For example, our third quarter 2018 report showed that black unemployment is at least twice as high as white unemployment at the national level and in 12 states and Washington, D.C.

Ensuring that the Fed doesn't ride the economy's brakes too hard

EPI consistently points out that we haven't reached full recovery until employers have to offer meaningful wage increases to get and keep the workers they need. EPI economists have repeatedly warned the Fed against "stepping on the brakes" (raising interest rates) to ward off imaginary inflation before unemployment is low enough to give typical workers the economic leverage they need to achieve substantial wage gains. As EPI Research Director Josh Bivens has explained in a video, blog posts, and other forums, full employment is vital for wage growth; no other policy has a hope of creating jobs and delivering broad-based wage growth without it. In 2018, Bivens and EPI economist Ben Zipperer released *The Importance of Locking in Full Employment for the Long Haul*, which argued that an extended period of low unemployment could deliver large benefits by boosting wages without threatening the Fed's ability to keep inflation expectations anchored at its preferred 2 percent—and even larger benefits if the Fed were to raise its long-run inflation target. EPI's Valerie Wilson appeared on NPR's *Planet Money* podcast talking about problems with the Fed's interest rate target.

EPI has helped spread the message through its years-long work with the Fed Up coalition led by the Center for Popular Democracy. EPI and Fed Up's view has prevailed, as evident in the very low unemployment rates that have been allowed to happen (4.1 percent or less for more than a year)—when, as recently as 2014, with unemployment above 6 percent, many were declaring full employment had been reached. Fed Chair Jerome Powell essentially said EPI's view was right in recent years—that the "go slow" approach was clearly better. In October 2018, California Rep. Ro Khanna cited EPI's position and research on worker pay and African American wages when he introduced a bill to strengthen the Fed's mandate to grow jobs and wages; EPI's Valerie Wilson participated in the briefing.

One way EPI keeps all eyes on the prize is through its Nominal Wage Tracker, a series of regularly updated charts and indicators showing that the economy is not yet where it should be. The tracker is widely viewed, and the chart "Nominal wage growth has been far below target in the recovery" got over 78,000 page views in 2018.

Completing the picture in the jobs guarantee and universal basic incomes debates

The idea of government directly providing paid work to all willing workers—a *job guarantee*—gained steam in 2018. In an April report, EPI's Josh Bivens argued that while pilot programs offering direct public employment should be part of the remedy for joblessness, the most efficient way to get most people working is by using macroeconomic policies (Fed interest rates, etc.) to ensure that aggregate demand is high enough to support full employment. After a discussion broke out on Twitter, a Bivens blog post outlined where EPI's view overlapped with other progressive proposals, namely the call to undertake a lot of public investment to create and sustain jobs. In a series of columns, Paul Krugman of *The New York Times* promoted Bivens's "more targeted set of policies." EPI has provided and continues to provide advice to federal lawmakers looking to start pilot public job-creation programs, including pilot programs proposed by New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and to be proposed by Maryland Sen. Chris Van Hollen.

In May, EPI president Thea Lee presided over a lively discussion with Chris Hughes of the Economic Security Project and Dorian Warren of the Center for Community Change about guaranteed income, the future of the social safety net, and Hughes's new book, *Fair Shot: Rethinking Inequality and How We Earn*. In *Fair Shot*, Hughes makes the case that 1 percenters like him should pay their fortune forward in a radically simple way: a guaranteed income for working people. At the event and in subsequent discussion, EPI voiced its commitment to using rigorous, empirical criteria to figure out which bits of the debate over universal basic incomes and radically expanded earned income tax credits (EITCs) should end up as key planks in the policy agenda to fight inequality and raise incomes for the vast majority. EPI has influenced these debates by advocating direct cash transfers for children. In 2019, EPI will be releasing a budget plan at the Peter G. Peterson Foundation's annual Fiscal Summit, and it will include a "universal child allowance"—essentially a UBI for kids—that would radically cut child poverty (and particularly deep poverty).

Analyzing the effect of job-creation and public investment measures on working families

For the eighth year in a row, the Economic Policy Institute Policy Center (EPIPC) provided assistance to the Congressional Progressive Caucus (CPC) by analyzing and scoring the specific policy proposals in the CPC's alternative budget and in modeling its cumulative impact on the federal budget over the next decade. EPIPC found that the policies in CPC's fiscal year 2019 budget—*The People's Budget: A Progressive Path Forward*—would have improved the economic well-being of low- and middle-income families through multiple investments. Specifically, EPIPC's analysis showed the real benefits of such job-creation and public investment measures as subsidizing affordable college, child care, and other programs for low- and middle-wage workers; expanding unemployment benefits; and increasing funding for education, training, employment, and social services. The analysis also showed that CPC's plan to use government purchasing power to lower health care costs would build on the Affordable Care Act. Although the policies in CPC's fiscal year 2019 budget reflect the decisions of CPC leadership and staff, not those of EPIPC, many of the policies included in the budget overlap with policies included in previous EPI budget plans. EPIPC's analysis was covered by *Nation* editor Katrina vanden Heuvel in an option piece in *The Washington Post* and by *Common Dreams*.

Preparing for a workforce that is now nearly half women and a working class workforce that will soon become majority people of color

Women now constitute nearly half of the paid workforce in the United States, and they make up an increasing share of the union workforce. EPI research shows that people of color will become a majority of the American working class (workers without a college degree) in 2032 and a majority of the working-age population in 2039. These changes mean that policies that don't address deep and persistent racial and gender inequities will be inadequate. That is why EPI's ongoing work to expose economic disparities rooted in racial and gender biases, and to assess how policy proposals would affect these groups of workers, is key to preparing for the workforce of tomorrow.

Tracking wage trends by race and gender

America's Slow-Motion Wage Crisis, released in September, described wage trends by race and gender. EPI economists also highlighted trends from the annual September release of household income and poverty data by the Census Bureau, including pieces specifically looking at race and gender-based disparities in income growth. EPI also put out a series of short analyses timed with press releases calling for attention to Equal Pay Day—a day of observance to raise public awareness of the pay gap between men and women—as well as Black Women's Equal Pay Day, Native Women's Equal Pay Day, and Latina Equal Pay Day. These releases received widespread media coverage in both general interest media such as Houston Public Media and outlets with largely female audiences such as *Essence* and *Glamour*, which, noting EPI's research, reported that "the pay gap is significantly worse for women of color, with black women earning 65 cents and Hispanic women making 59 cents to a white man's dollar."

Infographics on the myths around the gender pay gap and the double pay gap faced by black women were shared widely on Facebook and Twitter.

Tracking economic conditions for black workers and their families

Early in 2018, EPI released a report and cosponsored a three-day conference comparing the specific economic and social inequities confronting black families today with the state of black workers and their families in 1968. The year 1968 was when President Johnson's Kerner Commission identified "white racism" and "pervasive discrimination in employment, education and housing" as the cause of civil unrest in African American communities. EPI's report found that while African Americans today are much better educated than they were in 1968—and are in many ways better off in absolute terms than they were in 1968—they still face enormous obstacles in the labor market and with respect to wealth accumulation relative to whites. This EPI chart shows that—when you look at white and black wages, unemployment, poverty, life expectancy, and other indicators—our nation still has a long way to go in a quest for economic and racial justice. In a blog post, Wilson outlined steps policymakers should take to meaningfully improve economic conditions for African American workers and their families. EPI's research, and the conference cohosted with the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at UC Berkeley and the 21st Century Cities Initiative at Johns Hopkins, garnered significant media coverage, including by radio stations KALW and KQED, television station WUSA9 in Washington, D.C., and in *The Hill*, *The Washington Post*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Detroit News*, *New York* magazine, *The Atlantic's* *CityLab*, *Mother Jones*, and *Smithsonian Magazine*. Valerie Wilson discussed the report live on C-SPAN's *Washington Journal*, MSNBC's *Politics Nation*, and NPR's *1A*. The report alone has received 27,000 page views.

EPI commemorated February 2018, Black History Month, by joining with members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus and other leaders on Capitol Hill to discuss the state of black women and the economy.

In fact sheets and blog posts, EPI called attention to the legal and legislative attacks on unions that would disproportionately hurt workers of color and women. An EPI brief on the upcoming Supreme Court decision in *Janus v. AFSCME Council 31* warned that a decision stripping public-sector unions of their ability to collect fair share fees would hurt all state and local government workers, and black women in particular. As Missourians were debating whether to vote for the anti-union policy called "right-to-work," EPI released a fact sheet showing that black workers in right-to-work (RTW) states tend to have lower wages than in Missouri and other non-RTW states. Missourians would go on to vote against right-to-work by a wide margin.

Also in 2018, EPI released a series of short articles bringing attention to continued poverty in America during the 50th-anniversary year of the Poor People's campaign. For example, one post showed that the black poverty rate in 2016 was more than twice as high as the white poverty rate. Another post showed that workers of color are far more likely to be paid poverty-level wages than white workers. EPI analysis also showed that, by 2017, black workers had made no progress in closing earnings gaps with white men since 2000.

One of the myths blocking real progress is that workers who fall behind are to blame because they are just somehow not making the effort. EPI's 2018 report on demographic trends in annual work hours showed that people of all races work similar hours once they get into the labor market. Outcomes are not a result of differences in work ethic or personal responsibility, they are a result of barriers to getting into and staying in the workforce. EPI's Valerie Wilson carried this important message into her work advising the Democratic Women's Working Group, civil rights groups, and other constituents about policies to support workers of color.

Monitoring Hispanic–white gaps in wages, unemployment, labor force participation, and education

Hispanics now represent 18.1 percent of the U.S. population, making their labor market outcomes an important economic policy issue. In 2018, EPI released a report examining Hispanic–white gaps in wages, unemployment, labor force participation, and education by gender, immigrant status, and other subpopulations. The report showed that Hispanic workers continue to make significantly less than white workers and that the wage gap between Hispanic and white workers is as wide now as it was in 2000. And Hispanic women suffer from a large gap even when controlling for factors such as education and immigration status, which means that gender and racial discrimination are responsible for their low relative pay.

"There are many causes for concern in this analysis, but there are some reasons to be optimistic," said co-author Roberto Dávila. "For example, Hispanic workers clearly place value on education and Hispanic education attainment is growing—but we need to make sure that Hispanic Americans have access to high quality, affordable education."

Converting skeptics of the gender pay gap

To commemorate Equal Pay Day in April, EPI's Elise Gould and Jessica Schieder tackled the persistent refusal by some skeptics to acknowledge the gender pay gap. Their infographic, "You Can't Mansplain Away the Gender Pay Gap," and accompanying text showed that women are paid less than their male colleagues in almost every occupation and at every level of education. The Facebook post was shared 2,900 times, and reached over 330,000 people. A Facebook live discussion with Gould about the gender pay gap received 2,800 views. At the same time, EPI also updated its Gender Pay Gap Calculator, which shows women how much more they would be earning in a more equal society. EPI's analyses and tools were widely covered by media outlets including *CBS MoneyWatch*, NBC News, CNBC, Black Enterprise, and *The Baltimore Sun*. *The Cut* noted "one particularly interesting finding from the research is that women in unions actually fare better than nonunionized women." EPI's Valerie Wilson talked with *Vox*'s "Today, Explained" podcast correspondents about how things like motherhood and race impact the gender pay gap.

Advising institutions on the coming changes

Valerie Wilson, director of EPI's Program on Race, Ethnicity, and the Economy (PREE), helps organizations prepare their policy frameworks for the new workforce by sharing EPI's research and policy assessments in targeted educational sessions. Groups she has worked with include the AFL-CIO, Democratic Women's Working Group, and the Center for Popular Democracy. A key theme is the need to couple broad policies that will lift women and workers of color by lifting all workers, and targeted policies to specifically address racial and gender inequities.

Outlining how to do tax reform that really helps working people

Reports and analyses released by EPI in 2018 confirmed the dramatic increase in inequality over the last four decades. Thanks in great part to EPI, policymakers, journalists, and working people have come to understand that regressive tax cuts and corporate tax breaks—like those in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA)—do nothing to help typical workers and instead increase inequality.

Showing how the Trump tax cuts betray working people

Starting in January, EPI's Hunter Blair began releasing almost monthly blog posts warning that the corporate tax cuts in the TCJA passed at the end of 2017 would not trickle down and help working families. A precursor to any wage increases actually spurred by the TCJA would be increased capital spending, and that just isn't happening, he explained.

Claims the TCJA led to "an alleged tsunami of wage increases and bonus payments" and large increases in investment in plants and equipment were based on cherry-picked data, argued EPI's Josh Bivens and Hunter Blair in written testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee. The deeply flawed TCJA with its permanent corporate tax cut "will deliver the vast majority of its direct benefits to the richest households," they said.

At an EPI event in May, leading tax and legal experts joined Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.) and Lloyd Doggett (D-Texas) to discuss how the TCJA would accelerate offshoring of corporate profits and production. The problems highlighted by Reed College economics professor Kimberly Clausing, Brooklyn Law School professor Rebecca Kysar, and Chye-Ching Huang, deputy director of federal tax policy at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, were addressed in bills proposed by DeLauro and Doggett.

Throughout the year, EPI showed that the TCJA was not spurring a notable pickup in business investment, nor were bonuses surging in 2018 because of the tax cut. Bonuses in September 2018 were up $0.02 since the GOP tax cuts passed, according to analysis by EPI's Larry Mishel. (An update in 2019 showed that the average bonus for 2018 was just $0.01 higher than in 2017.) Chart no. 12 in EPI's Top charts of 2018 shows that the only thing the Trump tax cuts increased was corporate profit hoarding. The problem with corporate tax cuts is that the benefits flow to high-income households, who are much more likely to save money, Blair explained in a blog post. That makes them a far weaker form of fiscal stimulus than infrastructure spending or tax cuts or income supports for low- and middle-income households. In another blog post, EPI's Josh Bivens weighed in with different angle: If policymakers really want to kickstart business investment, they should focus on policies that tighten labor markets to goad employers who have become complacent about cheap labor costs.

Underscoring how state and local tax breaks to attract employers just move jobs around rather than create new ones

In early 2018, EPI added important new data to the debate about showering tax breaks on corporations in the name of economic development. A new report, *Unfulfilled Promises: Amazon Fulfillment Centers Do Not Generate Broad-based Employment Growth*, found that when Amazon opens a new fulfillment center, the host county gains roughly 30 percent more warehousing and storage jobs but no new net jobs overall, as the jobs created in warehousing and storage are likely offset by job losses in other industries. The finding calls into question the standard practice of state and local governments giving away millions in tax abatements, credits, exemptions, and infrastructure assistance to lure Amazon warehouses or other facilities when they don't get a commensurate "return" on that investment. EPI shows that rather than spending public resources on *ineffective* strategies to boost local employment (such as luring Amazon fulfillment centers), state and local governments should "instead invest in public services—particularly in early childhood education and infrastructure—that would be a much stronger recipe for long-term economic development," report co-author Ben Zipperer told the press. The report received over 17,000 page views and earned extensive media coverage, including in the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, *The Seattle Times*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Fast Company*, *MarketWatch*, *Business Insider*, *The Guardian*, and *HuffPost*. (In February 2019 Amazon canceled plans to build a headquarters in Long Island City, Queens, after local lawmakers and residents protested the $3 billion in incentives from the city and state.)

Focusing on the right way to save U.S. manufacturing

Economic globalization—particularly trade with lower-wage nations—puts downward pressure on the wages of most American workers. U.S. manufacturing workers and workers without a college degree have been among the hardest hit. When the Trump administration said it would single-handedly save U.S. manufacturing and the working class with "better trade deals," EPI cast needed cold water on that facile claim. EPI's trade research in 2018 made two things clear: First, policymakers erred by allowing the U.S. dollar to become overvalued, which made U.S. goods more expensive on global markets and led to large and damaging trade deficits. Second, while past trade agreements helped erode workers' power while protecting corporate profits, one can't expect new agreements to fix the problems because the whole process of negotiating the agreements (one driven by corporate interests) is flawed.

Emphasizing the link between the overvalued dollar and manufacturing job loss in every state and congressional district

In blog posts, op-eds, and interviews, Robert Scott, EPI senior economist and director of trade and manufacturing policy, cautioned that the Trump administration ignores the overvalued dollar at great peril, because it's the key factor behind a growing U.S. trade deficit that has cost American jobs. In *The China Toll Deepens*, Scott and EPI's Zane Mokhiber showed that growth in the bilateral trade deficit between 2001 and 2017 cost 3.4 million U.S. jobs, with losses in every state and congressional district. The impact of trade deficits is not limited to direct job losses. Competition with low-wage countries drives down wages and reduces bargaining power for millions of workers throughout the U.S. economy. Scott and Mokhiber find that trade with low-wage countries like China is largely responsible for reducing wages by nearly $2,000 per worker per year, for all of the 100 million non-college-educated workers in the United States. Most of that income was redistributed to corporations and to workers with college degrees at the top of the income distribution. The data suggest that we can help restore a significant number of manufacturing jobs and boost wages by addressing the chronically overvalued dollar that is at least partially the legacy of currency manipulation. EPI's research was widely quoted, including in *Axios*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *New Hampshire Business Review*, *Politico*, *Newsweek*, *FOXBusiness*, *IndustryWeek*, *MarketWatch*, the *South China Morning Post*, and "The Rick Smith Show," a labor radio program from Central Pennsylvania.

Bringing sober analysis to overheated debates about steel and aluminum tariffs

EPI brought much-needed sober analysis to often-overheated debates about steel and aluminum tariffs. EPI president Thea Lee, research director Josh Bivens, and director of trade and manufacturing policy Robert Scott pointed out that such tariffs could have been a useful first step in a comprehensive strategy aimed at solving long-running global problems of overcapacity in these sectors (problems recognized by our trading partners and by the Obama administration). Their views informed newspaper, radio, and television audiences through reporting by *CBS News*, *NBC News*, Philadelphia region's WHYY, New York Channel 1's *Inside City Hall*, and CNN; an analysis in *The New York Times*; an op-ed in *The New York Times*; and an interview with Bloomberg. An early 2018 report by EPI's Rob Scott predicted that hysterical claims of massive job loss stemming from the tariffs' imposition were baseless, and a follow-up report (released at a National Press Club event) argued that aluminum tariffs have led to a strong recovery in employment, production, and investment in primary aluminum and downstream industries. Scott's research was quoted widely, including in *Quartz*, *The Atlantic*, *New York Magazine*, and *The Week*, as well as on *PBS NewsHour*. He appeared on numerous broadcast outlets, including CNBC and Al Jazeera. Importantly, EPI also pointed out that the Trump administration seemed to lack the other prongs of a serious strategy to provide long-term relief to these sectors.

Highlighting the need for a broader U.S. industrial policy

At a Senate Finance subcommittee hearing on unfair Chinese trade, EPI President Thea Lee pointed out that China makes no secrets about pursuing an aggressive long-term industrial policy to boost its economy, often at the expense of its trading partners. The U.S. must "develop and articulate its own long-term economic development strategy," she said. In January, EPI hosted Susan Houseman of the Upjohn Institute who presented findings from a new paper challenging the claim that manufacturing job loss is primarily due to automation. According to Houseman, the research evidence points to trade and globalization as the major factor behind the large and swift decline of manufacturing employment in the 2000s. Caroline Freund of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, Michael Hicks of Ball State University and Josh Bivens of the Economic Policy Institute joined the discussion, which was broadcast on C-SPAN.

Identifying the home-grown threats to manufacturing

A March report by EPI distinguished fellow and former President Larry Mishel pushed back on reports that manufacturing no longer offers Americans good-paying jobs that serve as a path into the middle class. In *Yes, Manufacturing Still Provides a Pay Advantage, but Staffing Firm Outsourcing Is Eroding It*, Mishel shows that manufacturing workers still "earn 13.0 percent more in hourly compensation (wages and benefits) than comparable workers earn in the rest of the private sector." Manufacturing workers also enjoy an advantage in benefits, including when it comes to health insurance and retirement. The issue, as the title suggests, is that the manufacturing pay premium has shrunk from 16.9 percent in the 1980s. The pay premium has shrunk in part because lower-paid staffing agency workers constitute a growing share of manufacturing workers. Staffing and temporary help services provided 11.3 percent of all manufacturing employment in 2015, up from just 2.3 percent in 1989.

Making the case for strengthening and expanding critical safety net programs like nutrition assistance and health care

EPI has long argued that we should be strengthening and expanding access to family leave and health care instead of cutting benefits or making them harder to access. In 2018, EPI underscored the importance of these social programs to America's working families and the economy.

Showing just how hard it is for working families to get by

In March 2018, EPI released an update to its signature Family Budget Calculator, which shows what's required for families to attain an adequate—but modest—standard of living in communities throughout the country. The 2018 update included details on more than 3,000 counties, in addition to 611 metropolitan areas.

The calculator received widespread media attention, appearing in over 160 news stories, including in *MarketWatch*, CNBC, Politico Pro, Refinery 29, Public Service News, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, *La Opinión*, *The Miami Herald*, the *Los Angeles Daily News*, the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the *Baltimore Business Journal*, *Best of New Orleans*, and *Buffalo Business First*, among other local news outlets and dozens of Patch.com sites.

Because the family budget calculator provides local data on what it takes to make ends meet, it is used extensively by state and local allies and policymakers to advocate for progressive policies such as access to high-quality and affordable child care, higher minimum wages, better public transportation, and more affordable health care in their areas.

Connecting high poverty in the U.S. to a stingy safety net and lack of decent jobs

EPI commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Poor People's Campaign with a series of infographics and blog posts documenting the persistence of poverty in America and its economic and policy roots—including holes in the social safety net and the lack of living-wage jobs. In a series of blog posts released in December, EPI noted that while "government programs kept tens of millions out of poverty in 2017," the U.S. poverty rate and the child poverty rate are higher than they were in 2000.

Weakening and defeating attempts to shrink access to Medicaid and food stamps

When Congress and state legislatures were debating proposals to expand and intensify work-hours tests for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, also known as "food stamps") benefits and to apply similar tests for Medicaid, EPI jumped in with research on the likely outcomes of imposing such tests. A report by EPI's Josh Bivens and Shawn Fremstad of the Center for American Progress found that that the tests proposed were "excessively rigid" and seemed "designed to maximize failure rather than to help working-class people succeed." "The tests…will not meaningfully increase the employment rate of these workers, and will harm millions of Americans, including millions of workers in low-paying and volatile occupations," they wrote. The report was cited in press outlets including Public News Service, *The American Prospect*, *La Opinión*, and *Daily Kos*. The punitive work requirements for SNAP were dropped from the farm bill before it passed and momentum for Medicaid requirements appeared to wane after the 2018 midterm elections. In early 2018, a federal judge threw out Medicaid work requirements in Kentucky and Arkansas, ruling that imposition of the requirements didn't "consider adequately" the impact on Medicaid coverage.

Showing why excess market power is to blame for high health care costs

An EPI report, *The Unfinished Business of Health Reform*, injected a key message into the debate over rising health care costs. The message? Reducing the growth of health care costs requires confronting powerful players in the corporate sector—not only pharmaceutical companies and medical device makers, but also increasingly consolidated hospital chains and lobbies for specialist physicians. The report showed that U.S. spending on health care is higher than in peer countries, that health care quality is lower, and that the high costs cannot be attributed to overuse of health care in America. Instead, it is clear that the high price of health care is the culprit. An accompanying infographic, shared by Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and others on Facebook, showed just how much more Americans are charged for prescription drugs and procedures than their counterparts in peer countries. As report author Josh Bivens explained, while single-player plans can reduce health care cost growth, we don't have to wait for single-payer to be possible in the United States to start confronting these drivers of health care costs.

The report garnered coverage in the media, including by *Bloomberg*, *BuzzFeed*, *The Fiscal Times*, *MarketWatch*, and *New York Magazine*. The report is part of a body of EPI research debunking claims that reducing medical utilization is the main lever to reduce health care costs. The 2018 report helps make the case for building on the Affordable Care Act by going after gouging by medical care providers, not controlling use by decreasing medically indicated and preventive care.

Persuading policymakers, scholars, and the general public that there *are* solutions to the ongoing retirement crisis

Expanding Social Security

Social Security is our country's most important source of retirement income, but cuts included in a 1983 reform of the program have already reduced the benefits that the average GenXer and Millennial can expect by around 22 percent. Wrongheaded reformers, pointing to a long-run shortfall in the Social Security fund, are proposing further cuts at a time when we need to be expanding benefits. In blog posts, testimony, and speaking engagements, EPI's Monique Morrissey showed that not only can we afford current benefits, we can afford to expand them.

One of the myths that hampers proposals to expand Social Security is the notion that the program offers a low return on investment. Morrissey explained that expected returns on financial investments and the internal rate of return on Social Security contributions are equally tied to economic growth, but Social Security returns are less volatile.

Independent workers are much less likely than employees to have a work-provided retirement plan. Compounding their financial insecurity, they may be paid under the table or misclassified as independent contractors, which shrinks the wage base that determines future Social Security benefits. In testimony before the retirement security subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, EPI's Monique Morrissey argued that solutions include expanding Social Security (as well as other steps such as offering low-cost portable benefits like GRAs to workers who do not have access to an employer retirement plan).

Teresa Ghilarducci of EPI's retirement security project supported efforts to protect and expand Social Security with a series of blog posts in *Forbes* reaching over 100,000 readers, including "Senate Republicans Set Sights on Cutting Social Security," and "Social Security Does Not Add to the Federal Deficit."

EPI is active in the Strengthen Social Security Coalition, which has long championed efforts to expand Social Security. The movement picked up steam in 2018. In September, Senators Sanders, Warren, and Larson announced the creation of the Expand Social Security Caucus, which currently has 19 members in the Senate and 150 in the House. An expansion bill, the Social Security 2100 Act, championed by the chair of the Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee, Rep. John Larson, has over 200 cosponsors in the House (a companion bill is cosponsored by Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Van Hollen).

The Larson bill aligns with many of the principles supported by EPI, including sound funding, maintaining the program's contributory structure, and a progressive across-the-board benefit expansion. The Larson bill also calls for taxing some, but not all, earnings currently above a taxable earnings cap. EPI is working on outlining a proposal that, like the Larson bill, would gradually increase payroll tax contributions but would make the tax more progressive by "scrapping the cap" entirely. EPI would also ensure that payroll tax increases are contingent on broad-based wage increases so that low earners do not see a reduction in living standards.

Building support for guaranteed retirement accounts that will help bring needed security to workers' lives

In 2018, a public education campaign headed by former Maryland Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, EPI's director of retirement security, made great strides in building support for a retirement plan at the federal level that will offer uncovered Americans the firm financial footing they need to live safely and securely in old age.

The median amount saved for retirement in the United States is ZERO. That means that half of all Americans have no retirement savings. In large part this is due to the fact that half of all businesses in the U.S. don't offer a retirement plan. EPI wants to make sure that employees of those businesses can save for retirement. When a plan is automatic and easy, the vast majority of people take advantage of saving. EPI's campaign is advancing a plan that was tested in a 4,000-person poll and drew support from 77 percent of Republicans, 77 percent of Democrats, and 86 percent of millennials.

The plan would provide a Guaranteed Retirement Account (GRA) for every American who is not offered one through their employer; the plan would be portable from job to job and would give every American, upon retirement, a guaranteed monthly paycheck for the rest of their lives. EPI published the GRA plan by economist and EPI board member Teresa Ghilarducci in 2008. Ghilarducci and Blackstone Group executive Tony James proposed modified versions of the plan in 2016 and 2018. Ghilarducci, a key partner in the campaign, directs the Schwartz Center for Economic Policy Analysis (SCEPA) at The New School and heads SCEPA's Retirement Equity Lab.

As the campaign's director, Kennedy Townsend continues her longstanding leadership on retirement issues. As chair of the governor's retirement security task force, Kennedy Townsend helped launch a savings plan for Marylanders who do not have access to a retirement plan at work. Kennedy Townsend and Ghilarducci have used their expertise and practical know-how to raise awareness of the country's looming retirement crisis. They have traveled extensively to educate diverse listeners of the fight to ensure all Americans have a retirement account. Campaign stops have included conferences and panels at the Pepperdine School of Public Policy's Washington, D.C., campus; American University; Washington and Jefferson College; and La Salle University; and at events sponsored by AFSCME Texas Retirees, the Texas American Federation of Teachers, AARP New York, the New School for Social Research, and the online women's magazine *NextTribe*. Kennedy Townsend also traveled to Australia to give a speech at the Superannuation Conference in Adelaide, reaching delegates from 12 countries with news of EPI's retirement security plan.

The campaign also counts on key allies to help spread the word, including the American Federation of Teachers, EPI's EARN partners, and the American Academy of Actuaries.

Throughout 2018, Kennedy Townsend, Ghilarducci, EPI President Thea Lee, EPI Retirement Assistant Elyse Eshelman, and campaign partners met with more than a dozen past and present congressional leaders and their staffs to educate them about the benefits of the proposed national retirement plan.

The campaign has also gotten the message out through columns, blog posts, and interviews appearing multiple times in *Forbes*, *MarketWatch*, *NexTribe*, *Reuters*, and *The Baltimore Sun*.

Protecting public pensions from politically motivated attacks meant to weaken public-sector unions

In recent years, politicians and the corporate interests behind them have gone after public-sector pensions in a proxy war against public-sector workers and the unions that represent them. EPI has maintained a critical line of defense by pushing back against the myths promoted by the anti-union interests. "The pension gutting movement, which relied on shock-and-awe tactics and stoking the pension envy of taxpayers, lost some momentum as EPI and others pointed out that pension liabilities were being inflated for political purposes and that switching to 401(k)-style plans was unlikely to save taxpayers money in the long run," noted EPI's Monique Morrissey in a 2018 blog post. EPI's pushback has also included evidence that public-sector workers are not overpaid, and that pension underfunding is simply a way for politicians to get around balanced budget constraints, not a reflection of plans' generosity.

In late 2017 through 2018, EPI continued its important work in this area by coming to the defense of public school teachers and their pensions. Through reports and blog posts, Morrissey exposed the major methodological flaws in studies used by politicians to create a wedge between veteran and younger teachers and to replace teacher pensions with account-style plans similar to 401(k) plans. Specifically she showed that older, experienced teachers are not benefiting at the expense of younger and more mobile peers. Rather, existing pension systems—though needing tweaks to meet changing needs—attract and retain teachers, promote orderly retirement, and provide retirement security. Account-style plans would lead to teacher turnover and leave teachers at risk of inadequate income in retirement.

Also in 2018, Morrissey, along with EPI Research Director Josh Bivens and Mark Stelzner of Connecticut College, defended Connecticut public-sector workers from a state commission's recommendation to balance the budget by cutting the public-sector workforce and pension and health benefits. Morrissey later called Westport, Connecticut, to task for trying to gut police pensions and replace them with a 401(k)-style plan, citing evidence that slashed police and firefighter pensions elsewhere in the country led to an exodus of veterans from police and firefighter forces.

In their speaking engagements in 2018, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Teresa Ghilarducci from EPI's retirement security project supported the fight to protect public-sector workers from the politicizing of public pension accounts.

Protecting retirement savers from conflicted advice

After a Fifth Circuit Court decision vacated the Department of Labor's fiduciary rule protecting retirement savers, EPI economists Monique Morrissey and Heidi Shierholz weighed in on a much weaker replacement, the Securities and Exchange Commission's proposed "Regulation Best Interest" and related rules. EPI's comment focused on the economic analysis underlying the SEC's proposed rule, questioning the effectiveness of disclosing conflicts of interest and the supposed value of financial "advice" provided by broker-dealers and other conflicted advisers.

In the absence of effective federal action, EPI and its EARN partners have allied with state and national organizations, including the Consumer Federation of America and the National Employment Law Project (NELP), to support regulatory and legislative initiatives at the state level that would protect retirement savers and other small investors in those states and lay the groundwork for more effective federal action in the future. EPI/EARN worked closely with NELP on a State Jobs Agenda that included a recommendation for state action on the fiduciary rule. In New Jersey, the EPI Policy Center and allies encouraged the state's securities bureau to move forward with a uniform fiduciary standard covering broker-dealers and registered investment advisers. Similarly, in Nevada, the EPI Policy Center and allies wrote in support of a proposed fiduciary standard that would apply to broker-dealers' and investment advisers' advisory activities. Since both state initiatives were led by securities regulators and would not apply to insurance products, EPI and allies encouraged the states to consider similar actions that would apply to insurance providers selling high-cost and opaque investment products to unsophisticated investors. Looking ahead, EPI will continue to support state initiatives, including consumer legislation introduced last month by Maryland State Senator Jim Rosapepe, that includes a fiduciary duty provision that could serve as a model for other states.

Calling for world-class public investments in our educational system to combat inequality

Lack of adequate investment in our educational system is an important driver of economic inequality and a drain on productivity. In 2018, EPI researchers continued to document the challenges that need to be addressed in our educational system.

Providing new data on drivers of achievement gaps

EPI education economist Emma García, along with Emma Weiss (co-author, with Paul Reville, of the forthcoming Harvard Education Press book *Broader, Bolder, Better: How Schools and Communities Help Students Overcome the Disadvantages of Poverty*) continued her cutting-edge research on educational achievement gaps. In September 2018, EPI published *Student Absenteeism: Who Misses School and How Missing School Matters for Performance*, a report by García and Weiss providing critical new data on student absenteeism. They found that poor students and students with disabilities (those with individualized education programs or IEPs) were much more likely than their more affluent or non-IEP peers to miss a lot of school. They also found that black, Hispanic, and Native American students were more likely than white students to miss school, with English language learners missing the most. They identified higher absenteeism rates in certain states, and clear links between absenteeism and lowered academic performance. The report was featured in *Education Dive*.

Drawing attention to unequal access to college and unequal pay for graduates

EPI's report *50 Years After the Kerner Commission* documented some important progress in college graduation rates for African Americans, but also showed that large gaps in college completion gaps remain: Young African Americans (ages 25 to 29) are still half as likely as young whites to have a college degree. In *Class of 2018: High School Edition*, EPI's Elise Gould, Zane Mokhiber, and Julia Wolfe discussed some of the significant barriers students of color face in obtaining a college degree—most significantly, lack of family wealth and the need to take on a daunting amount of debt to attend college. An accompanying infographic summarized the major challenges confronting the high school class of 2018. In *Class of 2018: College Edition*, Gould, Wolfe, and Mokhiber found that while young graduates' economic prospects continued to improve relative to the period right after the Great Recession, young black workers still faced large pay disadvantages relative to young white workers right out of college. And even though women make up the majority of college degree holders, their wages continued to lag behind men's. The Class of 2018 reports were covered by many media outlets, including *The Week*, *The Hill*, *MarketWatch*, *Fast Company*, and *CBS MoneyWatch*.

Drawing attention to the teacher pay penalty and suppression of collective bargaining rights

As discussed in a previous section, EPI continued to draw attention to the "teacher pay penalty"—the percent by which public school teachers are paid less than comparable workers—and the relationship between teachers' low pay and growing teacher shortages. EPI also documented the implications of the Supreme Court's *Janus* decision for teachers' collective bargaining rights and the link between suppression of collective bargaining and an increase in teachers' strikes around the country.

Demonstrating that 'investing in education' is 'investing in critical infrastructure'

Too often public investments in education have been starved in the name of fiscal austerity despite the enormous—though often radically underestimated—returns on these investments. The policy agenda that EPI released in 2018 calls for an ambitious national investment in education from early childhood care and education through college. In his 2018 report on how to create jobs, EPI's Josh Bivens demonstrated that high-quality early child care and education should be considered critical infrastructure along with things like roads and bridges. Pointing out the high job-creating returns to investing in high-quality early child care and education, he argued, "These investments are crucially important to undertake even if they result in no net new jobs at all. But their deployment can be prioritized in part based on their potential for creating jobs in communities that need them."

Defending regulatory safeguards that protect typical households from corporate predation or recklessness

Hostility to regulatory safeguards that protect typical American households has become a defining feature of conservative economic policy in recent decades. From the perspective of capital owners and managers of corporations, this hostility makes bottom-line sense: Regulations are often an obstacle to the easiest path to profits. But these regulations exist to protect typical households from corporate predation and recklessness. Simply put, effective regulation is a key way the democratic process has historically helped to rebalance power in the U.S. economy.

In 2018, EPI continued to shine a spotlight on the most egregious attempts to weaken regulatory safeguards in the Trump era. Reports from EPI documented the unprecedented attack on regulations that occurred during Trump's first year in office: *Workers' Health, Safety, and Pay Are Among the Casualties of Trump's War on Regulations: A Deregulation Year in Review* (covered in *Politico Pro*) and *Ten Actions That Hurt Workers During Trump's First Year* (referenced in *The Week*). EPI also submitted comments in response to a Department of Labor proposal to reverse a safety rule that prohibits 16- and 17-year-olds from independently operating power-driven patient lifts. EPI's Heidi Shierholz finds no evidence that this change would improve employment opportunities for young workers, as proponents had argued.

EPI focused on exposing a few particularly harmful deregulation attempts—attempts to weaken a rule protecting tipped workers from wage theft, ongoing delays to a rule intended to protect working families from unscrupulous retirement advisers, and, as mentioned in the restoring worker power section of this accomplishments report, weakening of the joint-employer standard.

Exposing an attempt to skim tipped workers' wages—and hide the evidence

In December 2017, the Department of Labor proposed a rule that would have made it legal for employers to pocket their workers' tips, as long as they paid their workers the minimum wage. EPI released several analyses on the proposed rule, including a report that found that $4.6 billion would be taken from women in tipped occupations under the proposed rule. The report garnered more than 30 media hits, including in *The Washington Post*, *The Guardian*, *The New Republic*, *Salon*, *Slate*, *The American Prospect*, *ThinkProgress*, *Quartz*, *Bustle*, Public News Service, *CNN Money*, *La Opinión*, NBC Washington, *The Mercury News*, and *The News & Observer*. EPI also posted infographics on the tip-stealing rule, which were shared on Facebook and on Twitter.

In March 2018, it was revealed the Department of Labor had intentionally hidden required analysis that assessed quantifiable costs and benefits associated with the rule. EPI's Heidi Shierholz released a statement that called on Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta to withdraw the proposal. The statement was featured in nearly 20 articles, including in *HuffPost*, *MarketWatch*, *Salon*, MSNBC, *The American Prospect*, *Slate*, *Splinter*, *Vox*, and *The Hill*, among others.

Making it clear just how much delays to the fiduciary rule are hurting families saving for retirement

EPI Policy Director Heidi Shierholz continued to draw attention to the harmful consequences of delays to the fiduciary rule—a rule intended to protect retirement savers from conflicted advice by unscrupulous financial advisers. In "The Trump Administration's Attempt to Dismantle the Fiduciary Rule: A Year in Review," Shierholz repeated her astonishing finding that delays in the rule will cost retirement savers $18.5 billion over 30 years. In comments submitted to the Department of Labor, and in a statement after the rule was eventually struck down, Shierholz called out the department's "brazen dereliction of duty" in failing to properly quantify the impact of delaying the rule and the courts flawed decision to vacate the rule. *USA Today* interviewed Shierholz about how not having this rule in place harms investors. EPI's findings and comments on the fiduciary rule were also cited in *Newsweek*, *Mic*, and *Common Dreams*.

Reaching audiences across the nation through all forms of media and an increasing broadcast presence

EPI continues to be the go-to source for economic analysis in all forms of print and online media. In 2018, EPI was cited more than 1,300 times in magazines and newspapers and more than 14,000 times online. Influential outlets such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* continue to turn to EPI's research on a regular basis—citing EPI nearly 600 times this year. As a result, EPI was able to shape the narrative on many key issues in 2018, including the important role unions play in workers' wages, the exorbitant rate of CEO pay, the importance of rebalancing trade with China, and the economic arguments for raising the minimum wage.

Increasing broadcast coverage

In addition to our usual success with the print media, EPI was mentioned more than 1,300 times in radio and television news stories. EPI experts and research were featured in a variety of television news segments, including on C-SPAN, *PBS NewsHour*, Bloomberg, TBS's *Full Frontal with Samantha Bee*, and *VICE News*, as well as on syndicated outlets such as Hearst Media and Sinclair Broadcast Group.

Expanding website visitors and social media followers

In 2018, EPI's website received over 5.7 million page views. EPI's web audience skews young, with 25- to 34-year-olds the largest age group at 26 percent of viewership. At the end of 2018, EPI's Twitter account had over 50,600 followers, an increase of 45 percent from 2017. Our most popular tweet of the year promoted Senator Sanders's town hall on the decline of the working class, which reached 455,889 Twitter users and received 203 retweets and 448 likes.

EPI's Facebook account has over 120,613 followers, an increase of 17 percent from 2017. The most popular Facebook post of 2018 featured a graphic detailing how much Uber drivers get paid, which reached nearly 500,000 Facebook users and received over 48,000 engagements (likes, shares, comments).

Reaching engaged subscribers

As of December 1, 2018, EPI had over 301,000 active subscribers—an increase of more than 50,000 email addresses since 2017. During 2018, EPI organized and participated in several actions on a variety of topics, including telling the Department of Labor and Congress to reject the "tip-stealing" rule, urging Congress not to pass a second round of tax cuts for the rich, and sending letters to the Department of Labor opposing the proposed joint-employer rule. Over 120,000 EPI subscribers participated in letter-writing actions this year and over 115,000 EPI subscribers participated in petition actions this year.