**50 million workers want to join a union. What if they could?**

# THE CASE FOR TRIPLING UNION MEMBERSHIP

Surveys show that worker interest in unions is at historic highs and 70% approve of unions. Yet, today only 1 in 10 workers is in a union—and the vast majority of the 50 million workers who say they want a union contract can't get one because of our broken, outdated labor laws.

A new Economic Policy Institute report shows what could happen if U.S. union membership tripled from 10% to 30%—similar to its high point in past decades, when strong unions helped reduce income inequality, narrow racial wage gaps, and create a thriving middle class.

## Tripling union membership would deliver:

**14.5%**

wage increases for the typical worker, equal to more than

**$7,700**

per year

**A stronger democracy.**

Unions boost voter turnout, engage in civic education, and defend voting rights.

**Greater equality and smaller racial wage gaps.**

Unions raise wages for everyone and help prevent pay disparities, especially for Black and Hispanic workers.

**Better educational opportunities.**

States with a higher share of union workers invest more in public schools.

**$1.2 Trillion**

shifted into workers' pockets and away from corporate executives and shareholders every year, reversing a third of the growth in inequality since 1979.

**25%**

fewer uninsured Americans since unions often win better benefits, including health insurance.

Nearly **$270,000** in additional earnings for the typical worker over a 35-year career.

# What will it take to triple union membership?

Reversing decades of corporate attacks on unions will require ongoing nationwide organizing and strong action from Congress and state governments:

## Strengthen workers' rights to unionize

- Congress should pass the **Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act**. This law would make it easier to form a union and establish penalties for companies that break labor laws, among other key reforms.
- Congress should pass the **Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act**. This would guarantee all public-sector workers—in federal, state, and local governments—the right to organize and collectively bargain.
- States should **repeal anti-union so-called "right-to-work" laws** and ensure **collective bargaining rights for all public-sector workers** and others not currently covered by federal labor law.

## Strengthen collective bargaining

- **Guarantee newly unionized workers can get a first contract that includes a raise**. When workers form a new union, many employers try to avoid bargaining a first contract. Labor law should guarantee that if an employer fails to negotiate in good faith, workers can use arbitration to get a first contract that includes—at a minimum—a guaranteed cost-of-living adjustment. For a typical worker, this would equal $2,000 per year.
- **Require collective bargaining at any company where CEOs earn 100 times more than workers in their industry**. This would create an automatic pathway for workers at companies with the most extreme CEO pay ratios to bargain for a fairer share of company profits.

For more information, please scan the QR code or visit epi.org/tripling-union-membership and sign up for our newsletter at epi.org/signup.