



*A Union of Professionals*

## Unions Protect Workers and Working Families

### Unions help all workers, not just their members, get higher wages.

- Workers in unions earn 13 percent more than similar workers without unions; and workers in unions are more likely to have employer-provided health and retirement plans.<sup>1</sup>
- By promoting equal pay for equal work, unions reduce inequalities and help close the wage gaps faced by women and people of color.<sup>2</sup>
- Stronger unions set wage standards that help all workers. A non-unionized worker whose industry is 25 percent unionized is paid 5 percent more than similar workers in less-unionized industries. As unions weaken, that power weakens.<sup>3</sup>
- Children in communities where more people belong to unions can expect to have higher earnings and more social mobility.<sup>4</sup>

### Unions make workplaces safer for all workers.

- Unions create safe spaces for their members to raise concerns regarding safety without fear of retaliation from the boss.<sup>5</sup> This has led to safer workplaces, better reporting and the development of rules that help all workers—union and non-union alike.<sup>6</sup>
- When teachers bargain to make their classrooms safer, and when nurses bargain to ensure that they have supports to properly care for patients, they are making their communities safer.<sup>7</sup>
- States with right-to-work laws have a 43.8 percent higher rate of workplace fatalities.<sup>8</sup>

### Unions bring the voice of working people into politics.

- The Center for Responsive Politics reports that business spent \$15 on politics for every dollar spent by unions. Attacking unions will just tip the scale further in the direction of business and corporate interest groups.<sup>9</sup>
- A Princeton University study found that, of any group active in politics, unions were most likely to represent the views of the majority of Americans.<sup>10</sup>
- When unions are stronger, it's more likely that teachers, construction workers, firefighters and other workers will actually hold public office.<sup>11</sup>

### Unions help the pursuit of happiness.

- Regardless of age, socioeconomic status or race, being a member of a union increases one's job satisfaction and overall well-being.<sup>12</sup>
- A Duke University study on how healthy people felt found that being in a union offset the effect of five years of aging.<sup>13</sup>
- Unions have a positive effect on a worker's physical and mental health, which correlates directly with overall satisfaction.<sup>14</sup>
- Through benefits, job security and a sense of community, unions have a direct impact at the individual level—decreasing stress and increasing health.<sup>15</sup>

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.6 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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