

OPEIU LOCAL #9

Second Quarter

Newsletter

For Bulletin Board Posting
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PLEASE NOTE MEETING LOCATION

General Membership Meeting
Tuesday, April 17, 2018
5:30 p.m.

Milwaukee Professional Firefighters
Local 215
5625 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53212
(Enter through door in parking lot)

UPCOMING UNION MEETINGS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER

April 17, 2018 – Membership Meeting 5:30 PM

Milwaukee Professional Firefighters,
Local 215.
5625 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI

May 15, 2018 – Membership Meeting 5:30 PM

Milwaukee Professional Firefighters,
Local 215
5625 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI

June 19, 2018 – Membership Meeting 5:30 PM

Milwaukee Professional Firefighters,
Local 215
5625 W. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI

Excerpt from the Nonpartisan Economic Policy Institute (EPI)

Unions raise wages for both union and nonunion workers

For typical workers, hourly pay growth has been sluggish for decades, rising 0.3 percent per year or 9.9 percent in all from 1979 to 2015. If pay had risen with productivity during that period, as it did in the decades before 1979, pay would have gone up 63.8 percent. But pay for typical workers is not rising at this clip because ever-larger shares of economic growth are going to the highest wage earners. Income growth for the highest 1 percent of wage earners rose by nearly **190 percent** between 1979 and 2015, meaning that the highest-earning 1 percent have claimed a radically disproportionate share of income growth.

Working people in unions use their power in numbers to secure a fairer share of the income they create. Employers who have to bargain with workers collectively cannot pursue a strategy of “divide and conquer” among their workers. Workers who are empowered by forming a union raise wages for union and nonunion workers alike. As an economic sector becomes more unionized, nonunion employers pay more to retain qualified workers and norms of higher pay and better conditions become standard. For example, if a union hospital is across town from a nonunion hospital and the two hospitals are competing for workers, then the nonunion workers will benefit from the presence of the union hospital.

- **Union workers earn more.** On average, a worker covered by a union contract earns 13.2 percent more in wages than a peer with similar education, occupation, and experience in a nonunionized workplace in the same sector. This pay boost was even

greater in earlier decades when more American workers were unionized.

- **Unions also raise pay for workers by helping to enforce labor standards, like guarding against wage theft.** Union workers are more knowledgeable about their rights, and union staff members communicate when needed with government enforcement agencies, which enhances enforcement of wage violations. For example, workers covered by a union are half as likely to be victims of minimum wage violations (i.e., to be paid an effective hourly rate that is below the minimum wage). This form of wage theft is costing workers \$15 billion a year, causing many families to fall below the poverty line.
- **When union density is high, nonunion workers benefit from higher wages.** When the share of workers who are union members is relatively high, as it was in 1979, wages of nonunion workers are higher. For example, had union density remained at its 1979 level, weekly wages of nonunion men in private sector would be 5 percent higher (that's an additional \$2,704 in earnings for year-round workers), while wages for nonunion men in the private sector without a college education would be 8 percent, or \$3,016 per year, higher. (These estimates look at what wages would have been in 2013 had union density remained at its 1979 levels).
- **Where unions remain strong, unions have an ability to raise wages sector-wide.** An example is the hospitality industry in Orlando. Negotiations between six local affiliates of the Services Trade Council Union (STCU) and Disney World in 2014 led to wage increases for union members to at least \$10 an hour starting in 2016. These affiliates represent housekeepers, lifeguards, cast members, and other service workers. Disney then extended the raises to all its 70,000 Orlando employees, including nonunion employees. According to the Orlando Sentinel, the wage increases prompted much of Orlando's hospitality and retail

sector, including Westgate Resorts, to raise wages.

- **Where unions are strong, wages are higher for typical workers – union and nonunion members alike.** Compensation of typical (median) workers grows far faster – four times faster – in states with the smallest declines in unionization than it does in states with the largest declines in unionization.
- **Unions bring living wages to low-wage jobs.** Unions have transformed once-low-wage jobs in hospitality, nursing, and janitorial services into positions with living wages and opportunities for advancement. For example, after unionizing, dishwashers in Las Vegas hotels made \$4 per hour more than the national average for that job, and they were offered excellent benefits. And hospitality workers in unionized Las Vegas enjoy a much higher living standard than those in Reno, where unions are weaker. In Houston, a 2006 first-ever union contract for 5,300 janitors resulted in a 47 percent pay increase and an increase in guaranteed weekly hours of work.

By joining together, working people can transform not just their workplaces but sectors and communities.

From WorkJoke.com:

Negotiations between union members and their employer were at an impasse. The union denied that their members were flagrantly abusing their contract's sick-leave provisions.

One morning at the bargaining table, the company's chief negotiator held aloft the morning edition of the newspaper, "This man, "he announced, "called in sick yesterday!" There, on the sports page, was a photo of the supposedly ill employee, who had just won a local golf tournament with an excellent score.

A union negotiator broke the silence in the room. "Wow," he said. "Think of what kind of score he could have had if he hadn't been sick!"