

# Are unions still relevant in today's world research paper sample

[Business](#), [Company](#)



The recent legislative problems in Wisconsin prompted their Governor to tell the nation that that Unions are costing them too much and their power to collective bargaining needs requires facing out. Simply he says it is time to do away with them. The Unions facing challenge include those representing teachers, firefighters, police officers and other municipal employees. General Motors echoed this same sentiment when they entered Chapter 11 Bankruptcy and went through their reorganization process that they just completed. Over the last forty years, there has been significant decline in number of people joining unions. In the early 70s, the percentage of workers who joined unions stood at 30%, but today that percentage is only 13% (Koba, 2012). The history of Unions has been one of them fighting for personnel rights and sometimes winning, but mostly losing those fights. More recently Union membership has dropped and they have lost most battles. Their contributions to workers rights do include the 40-hour workweek, weekends and holidays off and many other HR rights we take for granted.

The decline in union membership comes because of many factors. First, globalization gave American corporations the economic incentives to move jobs abroad because of lower labor rates outside the U. S. second, the unprecedented advances in technology allowed corporations to replace human labor with machines and computers. Additionally, the U. S. economy is not as strong and jobs are increasingly becoming hard to find.

Nevertheless, most importantly, it has resulted from a coordinated push by the opponents to organized labor to wither away the power of unions, and they have proved successful to some extent. The Wisconsin Recall was a big

blow to a series of defeats for unions and a major gain to anti-union forces.

So, is it time to do away with Unions?

For those who have not joined the unions, they may not care because some are doing fine without the unions. The chart below shows union membership and the national income share of the middle class from 1967 through 2009 (Brazile2012):

The chart shows that as union membership declines, so does the share of middle class income. It is evident that the middle class is markedly stronger when workers join unions. As demonstrated by the chart, the sharp decline in union membership over the past 40 years has translated to an equal sharp decline in the share of national income received by the middle class. As such, those who consider themselves member of the middle class should be concerned about this trend. Looking at the chart, it would be appropriate to ask where the "lost" share of middle class income goes. It is impossible to imagine that it goes to the lower class because the segment of the population is growing. This share of the national income goes to the very rich. Bigger corporations are gaining much from as the workers lose.

The only counter to large corporations, which have almost unlimited financial muscles has been labor unions. Only strong labor unions can come anywhere close to matching the political contribution of large corporations. This sheds light to the reasons for coordinated attempts by numerous new conservative governors, who came into power in the 2010 Republican wave, to deny public sector unions their bargaining rights (Brazile, D. (2012). In addition to Wisconsin, the states that introduce legislation limitations or removing bargaining rights for state workers include New Jersey, Ohio, Michigan, and

Indiana. These tactics have served to frustrate the unions. For example, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), the largest public sector union in Wisconsin has lost more than 50% of its membership between March 2011 and February 2012 (Paarlberg, 2013). Consequently, if not out in check, the democracy of unions will no longer exist. Instead of serving the interest of the American people, those elected in positions of power will consider those people whose deep pockets put them into power. This will make the very rich immerse more wealth as the middle and lower class get poorer. Moreover, that could easily make America a third world country. Americans need to rethink their attitude towards in order to reverse the trend that has transpired for the last 30 years. Joining unions by workers will not only help to get better and more equitable benefits and conditions, but also help make a truly stronger democratic institution that can check Big Money.

## **References:**

- Brazile, D. (2012, September). What have unions done for us? CNN. Retrieved from <http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/04/opinion/brazile-unions>
- Koba, M. (2012 November). Unions seeking comeback: Obama 'owes them big time'. CNBC. Retrieved from <http://www.cnbc.com/id/49762716>
- Paarlberg, M. (2013 June). US unions' continued decline masks new forms of worker activism. The Guardian. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2013/jan/25/unions-decline-worker-activism>