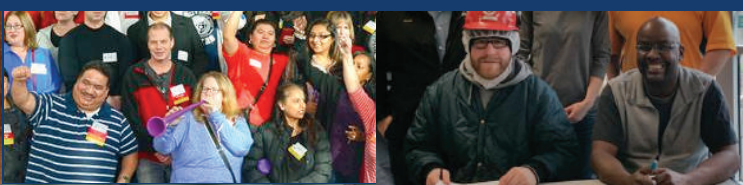




**DEFEND  
OUR VOICE  
GOOD JOBS  
FAIR PAY**

# WHY UNIONS MATTER



# WHY UNIONS MATTER

**If your workplace has a union, you'd be right to expect pay and benefits better than what you'd receive at a non-union workplace.** What you might be surprised to learn is that just by living in a state with strong unions, you'll also get better pay and benefits – even if your workplace doesn't have a union. Research shows that when a state has strong unions, the standard of living is raised for everyone. And those improved standards aren't just limited to benefits or work schedules: States with strong unions also have safer workplaces, stronger worker protection laws, and a stronger middle class. In short, pro-worker states have better economies than anti-worker states.

Corporate CEOs and billionaire donors know this. Across the nation, proponents of anti-worker policies – like the Koch brothers – are attacking workers' ability to come together and form a union. These anti-worker attacks are coordinated and shortsighted efforts to boost corporate profits at the expense of the middle class. While these efforts claim to just target unions, corporate CEOs know that weaker unions mean lower pay and reduced benefits for workers across the board – and that means CEOs and shareholders take home more.

We've witnessed attacks on working people play out across the country for the last ten years. Now, billionaire funders like the Koch brothers are bringing their anti-union campaign to Oregon. If these CEOs have their way, Oregon workers will see lower wages and reduced benefits; our workplaces will be more dangerous; there will be less money circulating in our economy; and worst of all, there will be more power in the hands of those who are already at the top.

If we want to fight back against shortsighted approaches to boost profits at the expense of our well-being, we need to stand up for the unions that stand up for our workers. Unions are key to ensuring the middle class is strong – and we know that Oregon's unions are what will help keep our state great. This report details the link between strong unions, worker protections and a stronger economy for all Oregonians.

# A STRONGER MIDDLE CLASS? YES, PLEASE!

*When a state has strong unions, standards are improved for all workers.*

When a state has strong unions, standards are improved for everyone, not just the members who bargained for them.

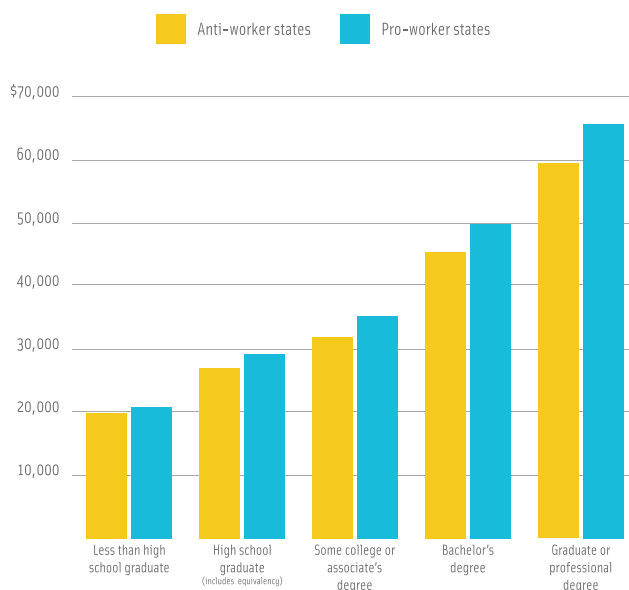
## 2013 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013

This effect is the clearest when comparing states with anti-worker laws to states that support unions. Workers in pro-union states – all workers, not just union members – earn more than workers in states with anti-worker laws. In 2013, the median household income here in Oregon was \$56,307, which is 15% higher than the average household income in states with anti-worker laws (\$49,257).

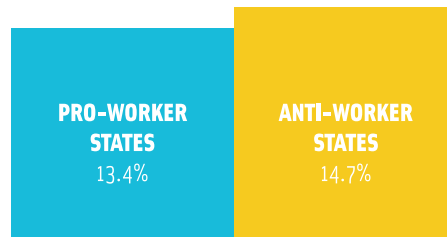
## MEDIAN EARNINGS OF ADULTS AGES 25+



Source: American Community Survey, 2009-2013

In states with anti-union laws, more people live in poverty. In 2013, pro-worker states had a smaller average percentage of their population living in poverty than states with anti-worker laws did.

## PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION IN POVERTY



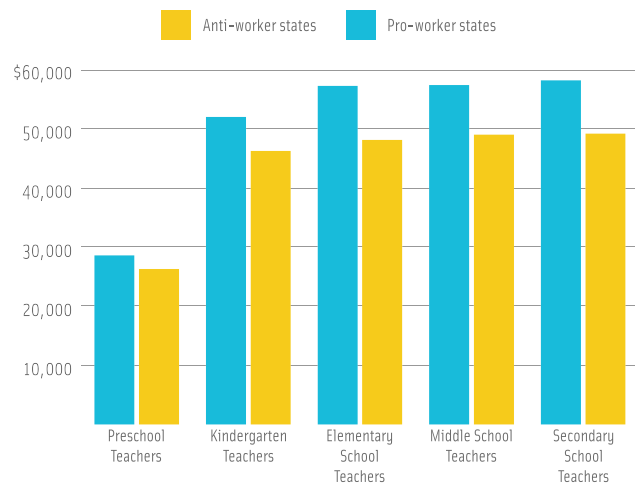
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, 2014 Annual Social and Economic Supplement.

Not only is unionization improving wages and reducing poverty, but it's helping eliminate gender pay disparities, too. Gender wage gaps are seen in every state, with women earning less than men on average for the same job. But these disparities are less pronounced in states without anti-worker laws. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2013, median weekly earnings for women in states without anti-worker laws were 82% of the median income for men, compared to only 80% in states with anti-worker laws.

**Across occupational groups, wages are higher in states that allow unionization.** The disparities are more pronounced in occupations that tend to be more unionized: Among construction occupations, the median hourly wage is 22% higher in states without anti-worker laws.

The differences in wages are even more striking when we look at specific occupations, like teachers or carpenters.

## MEDIAN ANNUAL WAGES FOR TEACHERS

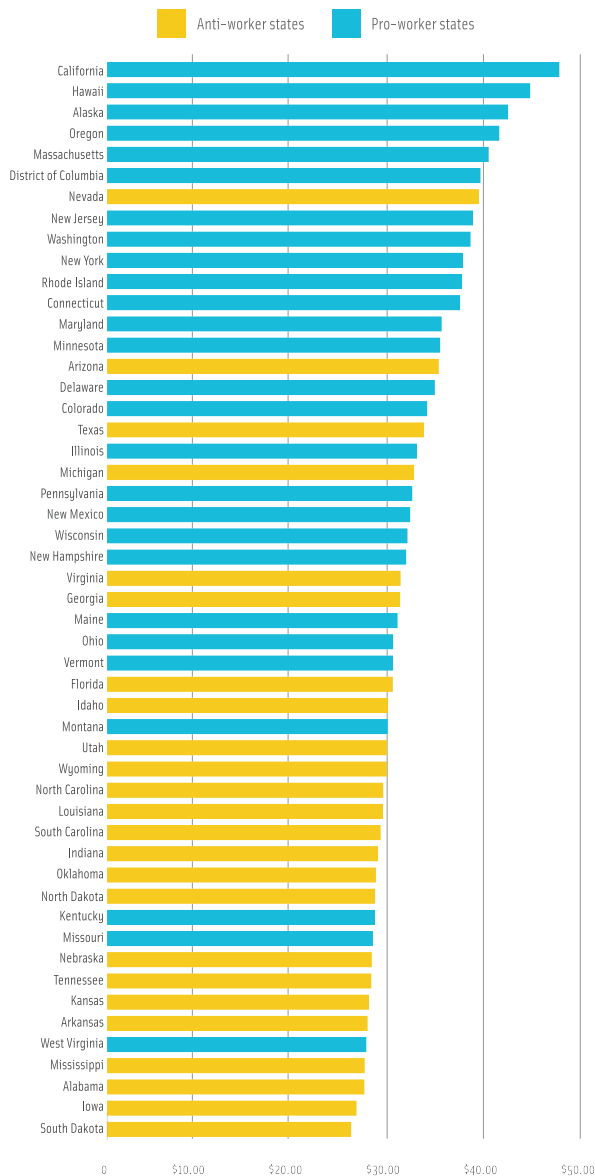


Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Survey 2014

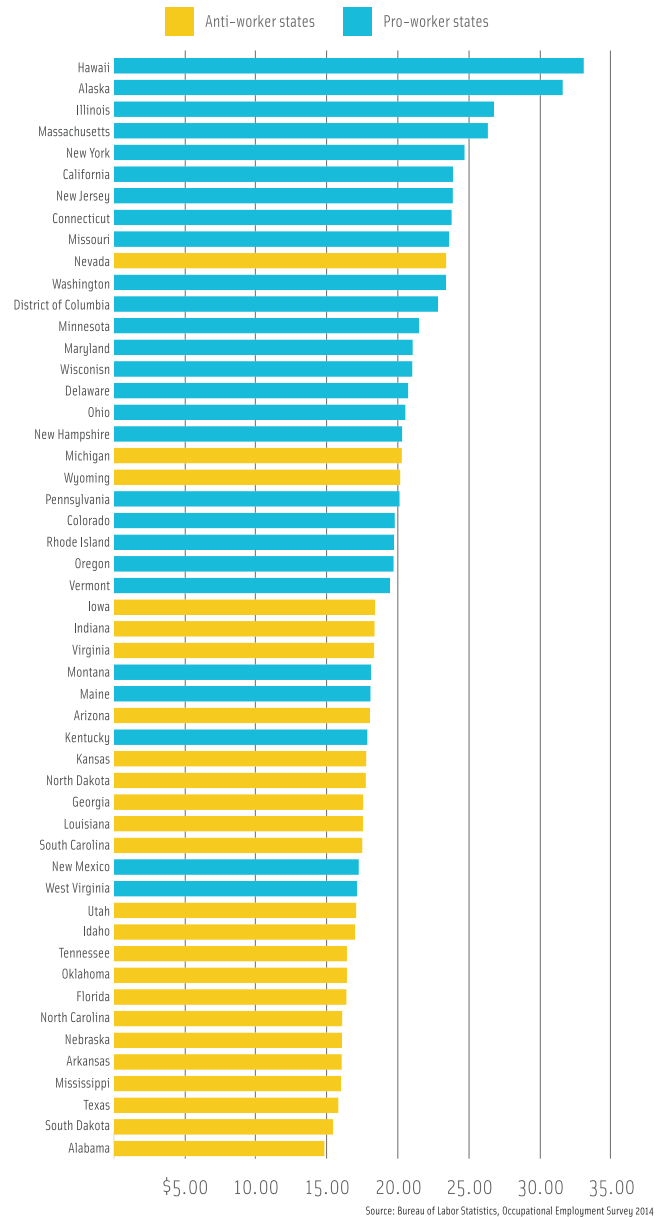
# THE POSITIVE EFFECTS OF LABOR UNIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING ARE CLEAR:

*When workers have the ability to stand together, standards are improved for all workers.*

## MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE FOR REGISTERED NURSES



## MEDIAN HOURLY WAGE FOR CARPENTERS



# STATES WITH STRONG UNIONS ARE STATES WITH SAFER WORKERS

*Another reason why we want strong unions in Oregon: workplace fatalities are dramatically higher in states with anti-union laws.*

Working in dangerous places can lead to injury, illness and even death. This is especially true when corporate profits are put above workers' wellbeing. To foster safe workplaces, unions invest significant resources in safety trainings and encourage workers to negotiate for appropriate staffing levels and equipment.

Highly trained workers are not only safe from the potential dangers that their jobs might bring, but they're also attractive to business owners. The New York Times points out that rather than take advantage of cheap labor costs, contractors see the benefits of employing trained and certified workers – many contractors are reliant on unions' training programs that keep workers up to date on the latest technologies and job skills.

**“ It’s a business bottom-line issue... (anti-worker laws) compromise my quality, my competitiveness. The unions are my partner. They’re almost like a screening agency.”**

*Bill Kennedy, president of Rock Road Companies, WI*

Most importantly, when workers can successfully advocate for safer working conditions, fewer people die on the job. Research has shown that **workplace fatalities are significantly lower in states where more workers are unionized.**

## WORKPLACE FATALITIES



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

How does Oregon compare to our neighboring anti-worker state? According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, fatal occupational injuries are nearly twice as likely to occur in Idaho as they are in Oregon.

## WORKPLACE FATALITIES

Oregon vs. Idaho, 2011-2013



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

Everyone agrees – a worker’s life is more important than a corporation’s profits. Pro-worker laws aren’t just good for Oregon’s economy; they protect employees from hazardous working conditions.

## STRONG UNIONS LEAD TO STRONG ECONOMIES, AND WE ALL WIN.

*Is it any surprise that workers who are treated better and paid fair wages are more productive?*

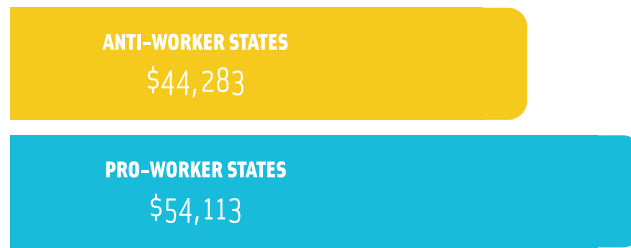
Data from the Bureau of Economic Analysis show just how strong the connection is between the strength of a state’s unions and its economic success. In states with strong unions, productivity and per capita GDP are higher than they are in states with anti-worker laws. That should come as no surprise: When people are treated with dignity in their workplaces – and when they have more job security – they’re more productive employees.

Productivity, which is measured by gross state product per employee, is higher in states where more workers are unionized.

By contrast, per capita GDP is lower in states with anti-worker laws. In 2013, states with strong union laws and protections averaged \$54,113 GDP per capita, compared to only \$44,283 for states with anti-worker laws.

## GDP PER CAPITA

2013

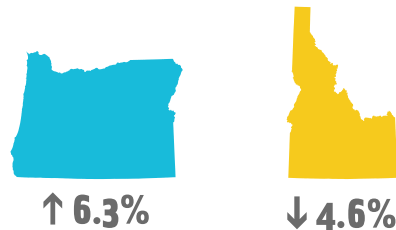


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Let's compare Oregon to our anti-worker neighbor to the east. While our economy is growing, Idaho's has lagged behind. Between 2008 and 2014, inflation-adjusted per capita gross domestic product increased in Oregon by 6.3% and declined in Idaho by 4.6%.

## PERCENT CHANGE IN PER CAPITA GDP

2008-2014, ADJUSTED FOR INFLATION

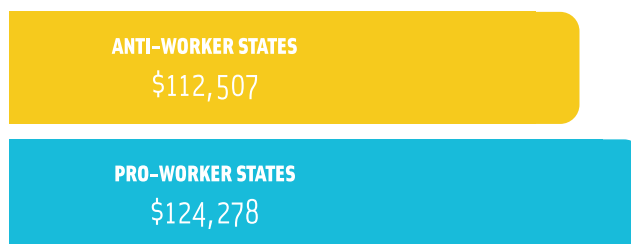


Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

And when it comes to individual worker productivity (which is measured as a state's GDP divided by the number of workers), that's also lower in states with anti-worker laws. In 2013, pro-worker states averaged \$124,278 in value produced per worker, which is 10% higher than the \$112,507 average in states with anti-worker laws. Is it any surprise that workers who are treated better and paid fair wages are more productive?

## VALUE PRODUCED PER WORKER

2013



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis

Strong unions mean strong economies – on top of improved working conditions for all workers. Let's keep Oregonians working in high quality, good paying jobs so we can all have a brighter future. **Let's stand up for the unions that have stood up for us for so long.**