



STUDENT LABOR ACTION PROJECT

A joint project of Jobs with Justice and the U.S. Students Association.



Fact Sheet: Labor and Education

This spring across the nation, state legislatures will vote to increase tuition at public colleges and universities. As colleges and universities secure more funding at our expense, we will fight for increases in financial aid, the hiring of more full time faculty, safer campuses, and improved campus services. What you may be unaware of is that the quality of life on our campuses is directly related to the wages of our campus' workers. For this reason, as we demand increased financial aid and quality services on our campuses, it's also important that we demand living wages, sufficient healthcare, and the right to organize labor unions for all campus workers- and the *National Student Labor Week of Action (March 31- April 4)* presents an exciting opportunity for us to do so.

The Plight of Campus Workers

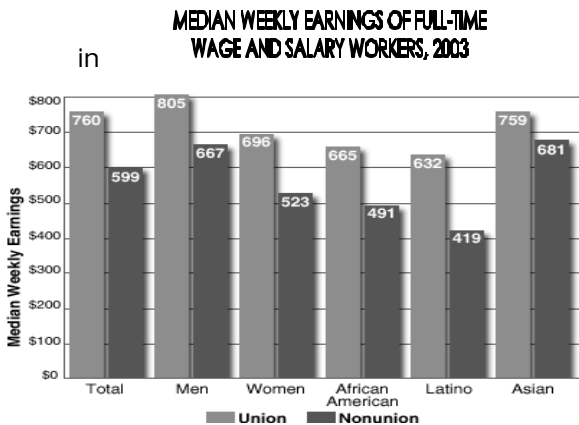
- Janitors nationwide work late into the night cleaning our classrooms and offices but most do not receive adequate medical insurance for themselves or their families. Instead they must rely on over the counter medication and not-for-profit clinics.
- While security officers are graded based on their ability to protect life and property on our campuses, our universities fail to provide the training, professional development, medical coverage, and safety precautions necessary for security officers to do their jobs effectively. According to a recent report, published by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) on security standards many states including Wisconsin, Colorado, New York, and Pennsylvania received failing grades when it came to regulation of the private security industry.
- Though at many universities graduate student assistants teach over 50% of the introductory and required courses, in July 2004 the National Labor Relations Board ruled that graduate student employees did not have the right to organize and join labor unions afforded other campus employees because their relationships with universities are "primarily educational".
- As the cost of meals in campus cafeteria's has risen steadily over the last few years, the complaints of unsanitary conditions, discrimination, verbal abuse, and union-busting by worker's in campus cafeterias have also risen.



Benefits of Labor Unions on our Campuses and in our Communities

When workers are denied the right to bargain with university administrators about the conditions of their employment our society becomes less just, less equal, and less democratic. Wages lag, race and gender pay gaps widen, campus apathy increases, the social atmosphere is more intense, civic participation is undermined, and corporate greed and power go unchecked.

For campus workers being a union member can mean the difference between living above or below the poverty line. Unions are also vital in helping workers fight for and win health care coverage. Given the current healthcare crisis unions are working harder than ever to ensure that everyone has access to quality, affordable healthcare.



Perhaps, even more importantly with decreases federal grants, many students are seeking employment on their campuses in order to pay for tuition, rent, food, clothes, books, and other necessities. The right to bargain with employers will ensure that student workers receive adequate pay that will allow them to finish college and medical coverage. **For these reasons and many more the United States Student Association supports the right to organize and bargain for all workers.**

What's being done...

New bipartisan legislation (H.R. 3619 and S. 1925) introduced in Congress will help fix the broken process through which workers form unions. The Employee Free Choice Act aims to:

1. Speed the process that certifies whether a majority of workers at a company want to form a union.
2. Speed the process of negotiating a first contract.
3. Increase penalties for employers who violate workers rights.

What you can do to support workers on your campus during the National Student Labor Week of Action...

- As you conduct lobby visits to your state and federal legislators educate them on the plight of workers on your campus and in the community and encourage them to support the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Pass a student government resolution supporting living wages and the right to organize and bargain collectively for all campus workers.
- Contact the local Jobs with Justice coalition or Central Labor Council in your area to find out what you can do to support workers on your campus and in your community.
- Organize educational events such as class presentations, workshops, or teach-ins informing students of the plight of workers in the U.S.
- Get a petition signed supporting living wages, access to healthcare, and the right to organize for all workers

For more information, or for assistance in organizing actions or events for the National Student Labor Week of Action contact Carl Lipscombe, the Student Labor Action Project coordinator at slap@usstudents.org.

For additional resources contact:

- Jobs with Justice- www.jwj.org
 American Rights at Work- www.americanrightsatwork.org
 AFL-CIO- www.aflcio.org
 United Students Against Sweatshops- www.usasnet.org

The Student Labor Action Project (SLAP) is a joint project of Jobs with Justice and the United States Students Association. SLAP works to engage students nationwide in the struggle towards economic and social justice in the United States. For more information on SLAP or to get involved in the National Student Labor Week of Action call (202) 393-1044 ext. 221 or e-mail slap@usstudents.org.