

## By Siena Quinn

Humans are an extremely social creature. These social bonds improved the survival rates of our ancestors. Now, the need to belong arises in every person's life as one of Maslow's inclusions on the hierarchy of needs. Labor unions are a concrete and important way to satisfy this need, among others. They also encourage individual voices to develop within the union as well as prevent the horrors of factory employment seen in the 1800s. Labor Unions are important due to their ability to bring people together and their protection of the working-class families' rights.

Cooperation in groups enhances productivity towards a certain goal. As mentioned before, humans have developed a pack mentality over years of evolution. They make decisions based off of what their peers and the people around them have decided. This is present within Labor unions because without them, many people would feel disrespectful or even mutinous asking for reasonable wages and hours. However, being in a group of people who want the same thing, namely the reasonable wages and work hours referenced prior, the ability to defend one's rights to those work aspects is improved due to an increased feeling of belonging. This need to belong is fulfilled with the pack mentality that comes from working in a labor union.

Another way labor unions are important is their ability to impede the repetition of the appalling conditions of factories and sweatshops produced in the 1800s. The industrial revolution introduced many new concepts to the world. Respect for the working-class was not one of them. A typical worker's schedule included twelve hour days, six days a week, with little pay. These conditions provided a breeding ground for infectious diseases such as cholera, smallpox, typhus, tuberculosis, and others. The road to cease these troubling climates began with forming labor unions. Going on strike and demanding fair treatment of these factory workers encouraged the growth of labor unions into what it is today. Collective bargaining urges those working families to get an just return for their services.

Contrasting life in the 1800s and early 1900s, labor unions today are extremely diverse. They represent women, people of color, a great hispanic population and others. This representation helps fight racial wages gaps via pay transparency and correcting salary discrepancies. One of the main goals of labor unions is to prevent discrimination, fight for equal pay and help middle and low-wage working people obtain their fair share of economic growth. They also prompt better benefits, and are generally safer jobs. These unions are helping every type of person in many different aspects of life.

Gravitating towards groups is part of being human. Our natural rights to sensible working environments are meant to be protected. Labor unions provide a means to satisfy a person's need to belong. Banding together to defend these rights prevents others from taking advantage of the working-class. By allowing negotiation of wages, labor unions encourage individual voices to develop. They defend democracy within America by fighting for laws that will not only benefit their own members, but all working

people. The cruelty displayed regarding workers during the industrial revolution cannot be repeated, and labor unions are here to do just that. Labor unions are important in their protection of my family and I's rights to equality in the workplace.