

The 2026 Ronald T. Weakley Line School Scholarship Winner - Wyatt Wilson

How have nonunion workers benefited from union collective bargaining?

The IBEW local 1245 based out of Vacaville, California has 26,790 members. How could so few members impact the 39.9 million residing in California and the United States population as a whole? You would be surprised how working conditions, wages, standards, benefits, economic stability and government policies are greatly affecting nonunion workers. Unions have established standards and best practices that are continually updated. Nonunions follow the same standards creating safer working environments and more efficient processes. As you can see, nonunion workers have benefited from union collective bargaining in many significant ways.

One of the most compelling benefits is higher wages. When unions bargain for higher wages, outside nonunion companies need to increase their wage to maintain and preserve their employees. Nonunion companies also must adjust to avoid high turnover. This enables nonunion workers to earn more because unions have established a higher benchmark.

Unions did not stop at better wages for their members. They fought for additional benefits as well. This includes but not limited to 401k's pensions, medical, sick time, etc. When unions negotiate powerful benefit packages, it raises employee expectations. Nonunion companies often respond by offering comparable benefits to attract qualified workers. This results in better compensation packages and contributes to better economic stability for families.

Government policy is not omitted from unions. Labor rights, working conditions, and workplace safety regulations are all types of legislation our Government has established. Once these policies become law, they are valid for nonunion workers as well. This improves overall workplace quality, for all union and nonunion members the same. Nonunion workers have also benefited from the powerful worker voice in the economy. When unions successfully negotiate contracts, they display the strength of collective action and encourage employers to communicate more openly with their employees.