

What Would Entice Employees to Join Labor Unions

Abdullah N. Bin Salmah

Abstract— Coming from a country that labor unions are illegal has led me to think that is a union beneficial for employees? Or it creates more chaos for both employers and employees? This paper will discuss four common benefits that employees gain by joining unions.

Index Terms— Labor unions, Employees, Wages, Job security, Benefits, Health insurance, Vacations, Training programs.

1 INTRODUCTION

Union is defined by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations as a “democratic organization of employees in a workplace who choose to join together to achieve common goals.” (2016)

According to Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Union Membership Summary", in the U.S, there were in 2015 about 14.5 million union members. However, going back to 1983, the union members were about 17.7 million (2014). This illustrates that employees are not very likable to unions as it used to be.

Some argue that unions narrow and strangle employment contracts. By minimizing flexibility and freedom in the contracts, both employers and employees could reach no agreement even though they all agree that some changes in the contracts need to be made. Moreover, fees will be deducted from the employees' account to join a union. Despite the fact that grievances where employees claim are a way for a problem settlement, it is a controversial issue because some believe that these grievances are a time waste driver. However, there are many advantages an employee would obtain by joining a union.

Therefore, I will be writing about what would entice employees to join labor unions, and what benefits they would obtain, such as higher wages, job security, benefits, and training programs.

2 HIGHER WAGES

If you ask someone to work full time voluntarily, the answer most likely would be “are you insane?!” If the person settles with only words, that would be nicer. Wages are one of the most important motivators people find to seek work opportunity. Meaning is that union is the employees' voice that without it, they might not be listened to judiciously. The union advocates for its members in which employees' salaries would be negotiated to be increased. According to Matthew Walters and Lawrence Mishel report, unions helped increase wages for its members by approximately 20%. (2003)

I certainly believe that wages or salaries are the first element people consider when it comes to hiring. Although they would be required to pay dues deducted from their salary, it would make more sense to pay dues as long as the unions fight for their employees to assure better salaries and wages.

3 JOB SECURITY

At-will employment is one of the gigantic concerns that spreads fairly in employees' mind. It means that employees can be fired from their work for any reason or sometimes for no reasons. However, employers cannot discharge employees because of their race or religion or other similar purposes. The labor laws assertively fight against discriminatory practices. Nonunionized employees are most likely hired at-will employment.

On the other hand, since unionized employees are not at-will employees, they can only make sure to be terminated for just cause. An arbitrator can be involved if a manager terminates a unionized employee unjustly. Unionized employees have the chance to go throughout grievance procedures beforehand the employees can officially be terminated. These employees can only be discharged for just cause.

As a result, in a very competitive workplace or industry, unionized employees would be more comfortable when they find the union has their back and work effectively to guarantee that their chair would not be removed unfairly. This defensive wall would provide them more power and hardness in employers' perspective. Therefore, any unfair practices would not be acceptable and the employers would think deeply before making any critical decisions.

3 BENEFITS

Even machines need some maintenance and time off. Employees are concerned about benefits, such as health insurance and vacation. Union is in charge of negotiating these benefits, which have to be included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Although some employers have the intention of raising vacation days, a union in most of the time works on behalf its employees' interests.

3.1 Health Insurance

The majority of employees care about the quality of the health insurance that would be offered. The unions negotiate with the employers to what would be included in the health insurance. For instance, the unions would be careful to create a plain language in which the insurance benefits would be clear to what would be covered by the insurance. Thus, more benefits might be added in the insurance unlike an employee nego-

tiates better health plans.

3.2 Vacations

Likewise, it is necessary to go through the conditions associated with the given vacation period. For example, whether there is going to be a time off for someone his fetus has died. These similar vague conditions would be argued to be included and clarified in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). It can obviously be seen that such conditions would not absolutely have come to employees' mind unless they have happened before.

Consequently, being in a union would lead to plain language in the agreement in which misunderstanding would be prevented.

4 TRAINING PROGRAMS

Training programs are one of the tools unions utilize to ensure that their members are well trained and developed. Unions not only care about employees' right, but also they offer training courses for their employees. The labor movement yearly trains over 450,000 employees (AFL-CIO). Therefore, this would be a competitive advantage that employees would be attracted by to join a union because improving skills would generally be through training courses.

5 CONCLUSION

As was previously stated, with the above incentives from joining a union, it is obvious how would employees attain benefits for being a union member. Higher wages or salaries are what I personally consider as the first key factor to accept a job offer. Then, job security and protection have their psychological influence to employees that they are taking care of, and they are going to be protected wherein their performance would be notably better as there is nothing regard their job they should be worried about. Next, health insurance and vacation play an important role that should be taking into consideration before being committed to a job. The unions would assure to enforce employers to provide as better quality for insurance as possible, likewise with the vacation period yearly and what is going to be included, such as sick, funeral, and pregnancy leave as a paid time off. Lastly, training programs are one of the significant approaches to evolve skills and increase knowledge level.

For these reasons, the unions will put their efforts and time for the purpose of assistance, protect, educate, and improve their union members, which how they would be enticed by.

REFERENCES

- [1] AFL-CIO. (2016, February). *Learn About Unions*. Retrieved from <http://www.aflcio.org/Learn-About-Unions>.
- [2] United States Department of Labor. (2016, January). Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Economic news release: Union membership summary*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.nr0.htm>.
- [3] Walters, M., & Lawrence, M. (2003, August). How unions help all workers. *Economic Policy Institute*. Retrieved from http://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp143/.