

# UNION DUES:

## *An Investment for a Better Life!*

**T**here are a few things you can pretty much count on in this life: The sun will rise, the weather will change, you'll be older tomorrow than you are today...and **some union members will complain about having to pay dues.**

Members in settings where decent pay and benefits have been the norm for many years -- state employees, teachers, higher education faculty -- may need to be reminded about **the union difference.**

### Why Dues?

Some members don't stop to consider how, **without dues, there would be no resources for their union to negotiate new contracts or provide legal help** to pursue arbitrations. Nor would there be anyone to take their side when they are unfairly disciplined and things got bad. **Without investing dues to build a strong union**, workers -- including professional employees -- are **at the mercy of their employers.**

## BENEFITS

### Specific Benefits

- If workers don't like paying dues, then presumably they've forgotten the very **things that dues make possible:**
  - job security;
  - regular pay raises;
  - paid vacations;
  - health insurance coverage;
  - just cause protections and traditional defined benefit pensions
- Examine your contract, and the next time a member complains about "those damn union dues" be prepared to list some of the benefits that wouldn't exist without them.
- Do they honestly believe their employer would be showering them with benefits if the union hadn't negotiated them?

### The Bottom Line

In the United States, in 2013, **union members' median weekly earnings were 27 percent higher** than for non-union workers. In 2013, **88 percent of union members participated in a traditional defined benefit pension plan**, while just 49 percent of non-union workers did. **84 percent of union members had paid sick leave**, while only 62 percent of non-union workers did.

Another way to look at it would be like this: **a single, union-negotiated raise of 50 cents an hour is worth more than \$1,000 a year** to the recipient. The reality is that the **dollars and benefits gained by investing resources** to support effective union representation **far outweigh the cost of investing dues.**

