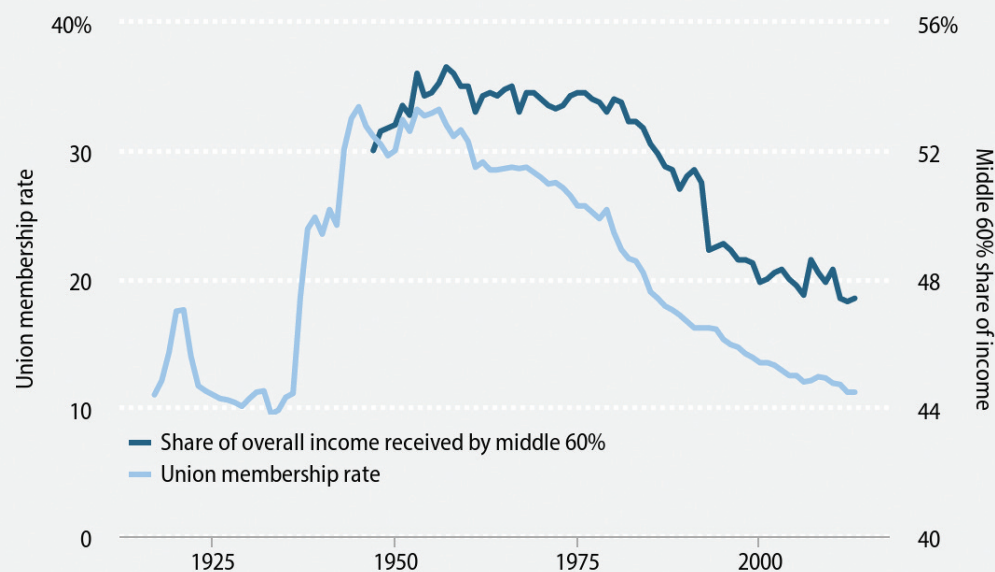


Union membership rate and share of income going to the middle 60% of families



Source: Data on union density follow the composite series found in Historical Statistics of the United States; updated to 2013 from unionstats.com. Data on the middle 60%'s share of income are from U.S. Census Bureau Historical Income Tables (Table F-2)

ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Middle class incomes suffer without collective bargaining

By Ross Eisenbrey
Economic Policy Institute

As a broad attack on unions continues, with Republican politicians leading efforts to eliminate unions or weaken them in Illinois and Wisconsin, Missouri and West Virginia, and county-by-county in Kentucky, it's wise to think about what's at stake. We now know what happens when employers hold most of the cards and employee power is diminished: profits and CEO pay skyrocket, and worker pay flatlines.

It is no coincidence that the share of income going to the broad middle class began to fall as union membership and power were reduced (see graph). The

middle 60 percent of families depend primarily on wages for their income, so as the unions' ability to raise wages diminished, so did the ability of middle class families to earn a fair share of the nation's growing income. Research has shown that as unions were less able to establish wage standards the wages of nonunion workers in the same occupations and sectors were also reduced. Politicians who care about the middle class should be looking for ways to help workers gain access to collective bargaining and restore union strength. They certainly ought not weaken them further and limit or forbid collective bargaining.

Portland considers 'Ban the Box' ordinance; Metro OKs resolution

The City of Portland is considering an ordinance to give people with criminal records a better shot at starting over and becoming gainfully employed.

The ordinance would require employers to postpone asking about or checking criminal backgrounds until after they make a conditional offer of employment. It would also bar employ-

ers from legally discriminating against people for their criminal backgrounds unless the employer determines that their offense has a direct relationship to their ability to perform the job. And employers would be expected to consider the nature and gravity of the offense, as well as how much time has elapsed since the offense took place.

The proposed ordinance, sponsored by Mayor Charlie Hales, got a first hearing March 11. Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain spoke in support, saying the current process penalizes people who've already paid their debt to society.

Fair Chance for All is the name of the coalition working to pass the ordinance, which is also

known as "Ban the Box." The coalition is led by the Urban League of Portland. It is supported by the Oregon AFL-CIO and many unions.

As of press time, no date had been set for a vote on the ordinance, versions of which have passed in other municipalities around the country.

On March 12, Metro council

members passed a "Ban the Box" resolution on a 6-0 vote. The regional council will remove questions about criminal history from its job applications. Background checks will still be completed later in the hiring process to ensure appropriate employment.

"Metro will now allow people to make the case for their qualifications on a fair playing field," Metro councilor and resolution sponsor Sam Chase said in a press statement.

Oregon governor signs first 'motor voter' bill in nation

SALEM — Oregon's newly sworn-in Gov. Kate Brown (D) signed a "motor voter" bill into law March 16. The legislation, supported by organized labor, passed largely along party lines, with all Republicans and one Democrat in each chamber opposed.

Under the new law, Oregonians who obtain a driver's license and otherwise meet criteria for voting (such as age) are automatically registered to vote. It is estimated that 300,000 voters will be added to the voting rolls.

"Citizen engagement is central to democracy, so ideally, we should make participation as easy as possible," said Brown, who authored the legislation during her tenure as secretary of state.

Oregon is the first state in the nation to automatically register voters using DMV records.

Providing auditing and accounting services to labor organizations and employee benefit plans since 1941

MKA MILLER KAPLAN ARASE LLP
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS SINCE 1941

Jeffrey Goss / Catherine Gardner
971.255.0546
MillerKaplan.com