

Unions and African American Workers

The Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) finds a substantial boost in wages and benefits for African American unionized workers and a particularly large union advantage for workers in low-wage occupations:

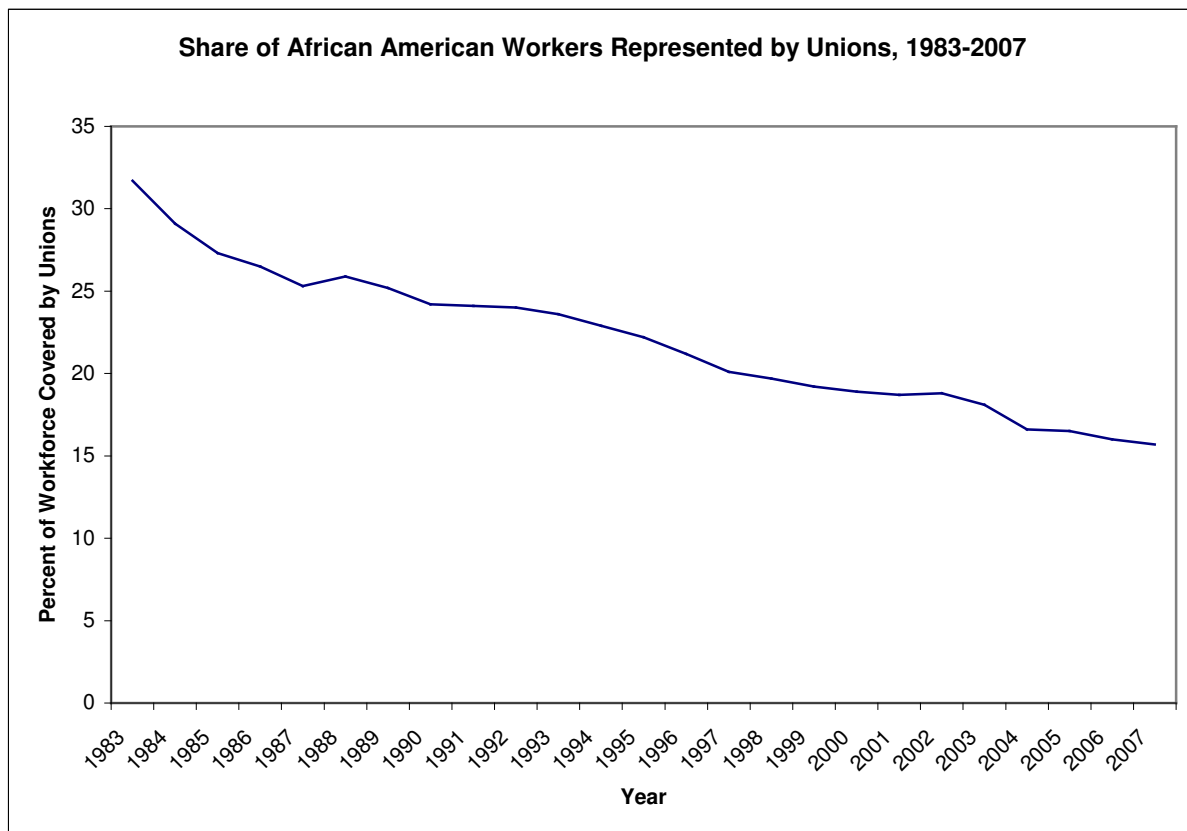
- On average, **unionization raises black workers' wages by 12% – about \$2.00 per hour** (see www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/unions-and-upward-mobility-for-african-american-workers).
- African American workers in unions are **16 percentage points more likely to have health insurance** and **19 percentage points more likely to be in a pension plan** their non-union counterparts.

The benefits of unions are even higher for black workers in typically low-wage occupations:

- For African American workers **in low-wage occupations, unionization raises wages by 14%**.
- Unionized African American workers in low-wage occupations are **20 percentage points more likely to have health insurance** and **28 percentage points more likely to be in a pension plan**.

However, the proportion of African American workers represented by a union has fallen substantially over the past 25 years (see www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/the-decline-in-african-american-representation-in-unions-and-manufacturing-1979-2007):

- The share of black workers covered by unions **fell from 31.7% in 1983 to 15.7% in 2007**.



CEPR also finds that **workers were illegally fired in over one-in-four union representation elections** in the 2000s (see www.cepr.net/index.php/publications/reports/dropping-the-ax:-illegal-firings-during-union-election-campaigns,-1951-2007).

For more information on workers and the labor market: www.cepr.net/index.php/the-benefits-of-unionization.