

## **WHAT IS A UNION?**

A **union** is an organization of workers dedicated to improving wages, hours, and working conditions within their workplace or industry through collective bargaining. **Unions leverage the collective power of workers to balance out the power held by bosses and shareholders.**

## **HOW DO WORKERS BENEFIT FROM UNIONS?**

**Unionized workers have higher wages on average than workers who are not unionized**, often between 15 to 25% more. Unions **also benefit workers who are not unionized** by raising the bar for everyone. For example, a high school graduate whose workplace is **not** unionized but who works in an industry that's 25% unionized overall can still expect to be paid more than similar workers in less unionized industries.

([http://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers\\_bp143/](http://www.epi.org/publication/briefingpapers_bp143/))

Unions can also **help reduce inequality**. While **all** workers benefit from having unions, those who benefit the most are typically the people who are the **most disempowered or in the most precarious positions**.

## **SOME THINGS UNIONS HAVE FOUGHT FOR AND WON IN THE PAST:**

- Health care insurance
- Ending unpaid overtime
- Protection from mass layoffs
- Anti-harassment policies
- Closing the wage gap
- Paid sick leave
- Paid parental leave
- Pensions
- Week-ends

**Employers will often do everything they can to discourage their employees from unionizing**, including threatening to outsource jobs or move them overseas, or to replace workers with more precarious and easily exploited talent.

**But those threats are already happening**, and it's how game industry bosses have been keeping our conditions from improving until now. Unions and international solidarity are the best way of combating these practices and their effects on workers.

**Studio bosses actively exploit burnout by hiring young talent that is easily exploited** by framing their employment in terms of working for passion and speaking about the company as a "family."

The language of passion and family is a common tactic employers use to **guilt or trick employees into overworking** to the point of burnout for the sake of company profits. And when those workers burn out, bosses simply hire more cheap and exploitable workers.

**Unionizing efforts don't have to stop at the border**. Organizers in different countries can work together to support one another and improve conditions for everyone. Bosses won't be able to get around unions by outsourcing your job if **everyone, everywhere** is unionized.

**Unions have begun to appear in the game industry**. The recently-founded **STJV** (Syndicat des Travailleurs et Travailleuses du Jeu Vidéo) in France is already working to encourage and support unionizing efforts in other countries.

**Unionized workers know that an injury to one is an injury to all**. The STJV also represents students and unemployed game workers as members, as they understand that it's by supporting them against unpaid internships, low entry wages, and job precariousness that conditions will improve for currently employed industry workers as well.

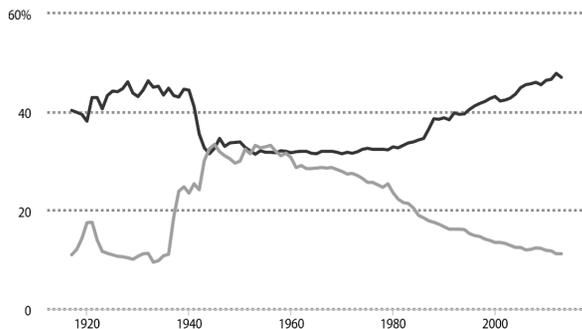
*Tired of crunch?*

*Worried management isn't listening to you or your concerns?*

*Are you struggling to pay bills, or lacking basic benefits like health care insurance or paid parental leave?*

*Do you suspect you're being paid less than your co-workers because of your race or gender?*

■ Share of income going to the top 10%  
■ Union membership



Source: U.S. Census Bureau and Piketty and Saez (2013)

## WHO ARE WE?

**Game Workers Unite** is a broad-reaching organization that seeks to connect pro-union activists, exploited workers, and allies across borders and across ideologies in the name of building a unionized game industry.

We are building pro-union solidarity across disciplines, classes, and countries.

We stand firmly against both exploitative labor and business practices.

The organization is run exclusively by workers (non-employers), but we actively encourage employers, academics, and others to engage in the community and help support the organization's direct action efforts both materially and through their visibility.

**GAMEWORKERSUNITE.ORG**

🐦 **@GAMEWORKERS**



*Poor working conditions in the game industry have been making headlines for years now. But so far there's been little concrete action to actually address widespread issues like unpaid overtime, mass layoffs, or wages that are much lower than the rest of the tech sector. Unions are a tried and tested way for workers to fight back against exploitation and abuse.*

*Game workers of the world, unite!*